

for an answer and still wrestling with how they should vote, I commend to them the example of previous days and the example of sending a strong signal around the globe that this President is supported in his efforts in international diplomacy and that he is entitled to the team he has chosen.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes. I appreciate the distinguished minority leader for indulging me and allowing me to go forward.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mike Pompeo, of Kansas, to be Secretary of State.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I begin, I want to welcome the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, who just finished his address before a joint meeting of Congress. His words were timely, particularly his admonition to reject false idols of our time: isolationism, cynicism. He argued that if we were to advance principles upon which both our Nations were founded—as he would say, “liberte, egalite, and fraternite”—he would say it better than I, of course—and secure the prosperity and security of our peoples in the future, we must seek further cooperation with our allies and engagement with the world. I hope everyone at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue takes President Macron’s words to heart.

Madam President, the Senate is considering the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the next Secretary of State. I must admit that even after his confirmation to the directorship of the CIA, I remained concerned about Mr. Pompeo when he was in the Congress. I talked to him directly. I told him how deeply disappointed I was in how he handled the Benghazi hearings, how partisan they were. I told him some of his comments about minority groups—Muslims in particular—were way over the top. Over the course of his tenure at Langley, I met with him several times after that first meeting where I had given him my views on some of the things I disagreed with in what he did.

I have to say, those meetings were good meetings. He was very candid

with me. He is obviously very smart. He is obviously well informed about foreign policy—far more well informed than Secretary Tillerson was when he came to visit me before his nomination hearing. In particular, what gave me some good feeling was that Mr. Pompeo was particularly strong on Russia sanctions, even showing some separation from the President as we met. I began to think Mr. Pompeo was better than my first impression, which has been guided particularly by his very poor performance in the Benghazi hearings. Then, he was nominated for Secretary of State. That is a whole different ball game. Anyone nominated for such a critical security position deserves the most careful and thoughtful scrutiny.

With that in mind, I met with Mr. Pompeo privately, where I interviewed him on foreign policy. Frankly, on many issues, our views were not the same. He was far more hawkish than I prefer our diplomat to be. Frankly, my views were probably, on this issue, a little closer to the President’s, who remembered, as I do, that in Iraq, we spent over \$1 trillion and lost close to 5,000 of our bravest young men and women, and Iraq doesn’t seem much better off today than it was then.

My view was that he was too quick to recommend strong military action when diplomacy might do. At the same time, I believe the President should get to pick his team. President Trump wanted a more hawkish Secretary of State—it would be concerning to me, but it is his decision—and Mr. Pompeo answered my questions with the same candor and forthrightness as in our previous meetings.

I thought I would wait for his hearing—because speaking in public is different than speaking privately to a Member of the Senate—before making the decision. At Mr. Pompeo’s hearing, I became very disappointed. First, the President has shown in word and deed that he often directs foreign policy by impulse—erratically, inconsistently. The fact that we are contending with several hotspots in the world—North Korea, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, and Russia—means we need someone in the State Department who not only prizes the value of diplomacy but is willing to check the President’s worst instincts. Unfortunately, Mr. Pompeo’s testimony—and, of course, public testimony is the real test—did little to convince me that he would be a strong tempering influence on an often erratic President. He didn’t convince me that he would be the kind of Secretary who most of us believe Secretary Mattis is, who is able, successfully, to check the President when the President may go off base. Even more disappointing was Mr. Pompeo’s tepid responses to questions about his commitment to bedrock principles such as rule of law.

As important and difficult as our foreign policy decisions are, the Nation is facing a great test. The President seems to tempt rule of law in America when it comes to the investigation of

whether there was collusion between his administration, his campaign, and Russia. An investigation to look into this—to look into Russian interference in our elections and whether there was participation of the President or members of his campaign or administration—is vital to the bedrock of America. Even worse is if a President says: I can undo this investigation one way or another; I can thwart it.

He is already trying to intimidate it, but fortunately Mr. Mueller is not the type who is intimidated, and Mr. Rosenstein does not seem to be either. These questions were crucial. A key position like Secretary of State should be able to speak out on this kind of issue because America is recognized throughout the world as the country that most prizes rule of law. If our Secretary doesn’t speak out strongly against this, it is not only bad for our country but not good for his ability to do his job around the world. Unfortunately, I was deeply disappointed.

Mr. Pompeo responded, when put to this question as to whether he would stand up to the President, whether he would resign or otherwise protest the President’s actions that would undermine the rule of law—his answers were weak. He did not say he would resign if the President fired Mueller or Rosenstein. To me, a Cabinet officer should do that. He did not even unequivocally state that he would publicly urge the President not to fire Mr. Mueller. That was not good enough, but I thought I again owed Mr. Pompeo a direct discussion because he is a talented man, and the President does deserve the benefit of the doubt.

So I called him into my office for one private meeting, one final meeting. I asked him pointedly whether he would be able to simply say publicly, before we voted on him, that the President shouldn’t fire Special Counsel Mueller. I asked him what he would do if the President fired the special counsel or Mr. Rosenstein. His answers were extremely insufficient. I also asked him if he would be willing to recant or undo some of what he had said about Muslims, Indian Americans, LGBTQ Americans, and women’s rights now that he was in line to be our Secretary of State and had to deal with countries that might be affected by his remarks. Again, he demurred. When he left that meeting, I emerged with a clear conscience in that a vote against Mr. Pompeo’s nomination was the right thing to do.

I still believe a President deserves his team and that disagreements on policy alone are not sufficient reasons to reject a nomination, but I gave Mr. Pompeo the benefit of the doubt and three chances to answer the questions I thought were extremely important to assuage my broader concerns about his nomination. He did not answer those questions in any way that was satisfying. So, with a clear conscience, I will be voting against his nomination.

Let me be clear. This is not about politics. This is not about denying the

President his team just for the sake of it. It is about the role of Congress and, frankly, the Cabinet to provide a check on a President who might go off the rails and undo the respect for the rule of law, the tradition of the rule of law, that we have had in this country for so long.

It is my view that the next Secretary of State, in this unique moment of history, with a President who seems to behave erratically and with little regard, oftentimes, for our Nation's history, a President who tests our constitutional order, must be willing to put country first and stand up for our most sacred and fundamental, foundational values—for the rule of law, for the idea that no person, not even the President, is above the rule of law.

Unfortunately, Mr. Pompeo, in these very difficult and troubled times, didn't meet that test as much as I wish he had. I don't doubt that the President could nominate someone with the right experience, the right values, and the right commitment to our core, national principles to earn my vote to be Secretary of State, but I do not believe Mr. Pompeo has those qualities so I will be voting no on his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I have come here for the first time in what will be a weekly speech that I will give as long as we have somebody, in my opinion, who is improperly and unjustly being held in a Turkish prison.

As a matter of fact, this man, Pastor Andrew Brunson, has been in a Turkish prison for 565 days. He was arrested in October of 2016. He didn't even receive charges until about 2 months ago—so arrested, without charges—conspiracy to plot a coup attempt against President Erdogan and his regime in Turkey.

About a month ago—it was, maybe, about 2 months back, 3 months back—I heard from some people that Pastor Brunson was afraid that with his time in prison and the charges being levied against him, the American people were going to read the charges and forget about him and turn their backs. That is why I decided to travel to Turkey and meet with him in prison about a month ago. It was to let him know I had no intention of forgetting him and that I had every intention of making sure everybody understood what was going on with this case and why it should be a lesson to anybody who is thinking about traveling to Turkey today from the United States.

Before I start this, I have to talk a little bit about Turkey. It is a NATO ally. It is a country I led a delegation to when I was Speaker of the House in North Carolina. I spent almost 2 weeks there back about 6 years ago because I saw great opportunities for our State of North Carolina and the country of Turkey to build closer ties—closer eco-

nomic ties, closer cultural ties. I saw real opportunities to strengthen the relationship with a very important NATO ally. Yet now I am beginning to doubt whether what I saw in Turkey—at least the Turkey I visited 6 years ago—is the Turkey we are confronted with today.

Pastor Brunson, a gentleman from Black Mountain, NC, was part of a church up there at Montreat, which was the same church, a Presbyterian church, that Rev. Billy Graham was a part of. The injustice I see displayed to him makes me wonder if the people from the State of Iowa or from the State of North Carolina should go to that country until we understand whether American citizens can be treated justly there.

He has spent 565 days in a Turkish prison. For about 15 months, he was in a cell that was designed for eight people. It had 21 people in it. The others had been charged with terrorism and conspiracy to plot a coup. Pastor Brunson has been in Turkey for 20 years. All he is guilty of is of being a Christian and trying to bring a Christian message to those who want to hear it. He has a church in Izmir. It is a very small church. You can only seat about 120 people in it. They open it up, and they let anybody walk in off the street to hear what they are saying. They work with the police department to make sure they are secure and that they understand what they are saying. There was no nefarious purpose here except to have done his job for 20 years as a missionary in Turkey.

I am going to come back to this slide in a minute.

It is also important to understand timing. The coup occurred in 2016. Pastor Brunson and his wife Norine had actually traveled back to the United States. They were having a visit with family in North Carolina. President Erdogan and the Erdogan regime were rounding up tens of thousands of people and putting them in prison, even somebody loosely associated with the coup, and many who were not were being arrested. Pastor Brunson was in North Carolina at the time, but he and Norine went back to Turkey at a time when people were being rounded up. When he got back, they rounded him up.

Why on Earth would any reasonable person go back if he had been involved with it and had seen what had been happening in Turkey? That is just one data point. Now let's cover a few more.

First off, I have to bring this up. I have to say, after I went and visited Turkey for about 48 hours about a month ago, I went back last week. I, actually, spent 12 hours in a Turkish courthouse and listened to the charges against Pastor Brunson. It was remarkable. It was a three-judge panel. Imagine that they are sitting up at the dais, and next to them—unlike in our courts, where you have the defense and the prosecutor sitting on equal terms—their prosecutor is sitting up at the dais and is actually looking like a

fourth judge. In Turkey, you are, more or less, considered guilty until proven innocent. It truly was, in my opinion—look it up if you do not know what a kangaroo court is—a kangaroo court.

They have already decided they want to prosecute him, and they are trying to get some of the most specious, circumstantial arguments to convict him to 35 years. He is 50 years old. By the way, he has lost 50 pounds since he has been in prison. A sentence of 35 years is effectively a death sentence for the kinds of charges I will tell you a little bit about.

No. 1, it is very clear to me, after spending 12 hours in a courtroom, that the Turkish authorities believe that any religious organization is actually a part of a broader plot to undermine the Turkish Government and to promote terrorist activities. They actually view the Christian faiths, the Christian religions in the United States—the missionaries—as some sort of coordinated plot to undermine the country of Turkey. They view a missionary who risks life and limb to go into the Syrian countryside to help people who are trying to flee the carnage that is occurring in Syria—to give them food, water, and comfort—as being, in some way, someone who is perpetrating and being a coconspirator in a plot by the PKK, which is a terrorist organization that is focused on opposing Turkey. That is what missionaries are subjected to.

As a matter of fact, there was a part of the court proceedings during which they suggested the mere fact that Pastor Brunson, who is a Presbyterian, had Mormons enter his church—actually, it is just part of the services, and they are services that are wide open to anyone. Yet, because of the mere connection with the Mormons, who also do missionary work in Turkey and Syria, they were able to glue together, on a circumstantial basis, the idea that because they have actually talked to each other and the Mormons have also provided missions to the Kurdish region, they are a part of the PKK.

That is what we are talking about. That is why I am giving everyone a stern warning. If you are traveling to this country, I can't guarantee your safety based on the facts as they exist today. I am trying to get somebody out who is only guilty for actually being a Christian missionary in Turkey for 20 years.

I am not going to go into the details of this, but when you invest 12 hours in a courtroom, it is a really accelerated learning process. Let me give you an idea of some of the things they said because they observed this. We are not talking about any specific charge for something violent that occurred or something damaging that occurred. This is the level of evidence that was presented against Pastor Brunson.

There is a dish that is cooked over there. I don't know. I love Turkish food. I eat anything. Usually, when I go over there, I gain weight. It is good

food. Well, there was this communication between the daughter and the father about a good meal they had had. They suggested that communication—because it was of food that is, apparently, enjoyed by the Kurds—was a reason to suspect that somehow they were conspirators in the PKK plot. So I tell somebody who is traveling to Turkey, be careful what you eat and be careful what you like and don't put it on Facebook because you, too, could find yourself in a Turkish prison.

That is the level of argument they are using against this man who has been in prison for 565 days. I am not making this up. You could not create a movie plot that would be more egregious in terms of the way they have treated this man for 565 days.

After I went to the Turkish prison, Pastor Brunson and I spent about an hour and a half together. To the Turkish prison officials' credit, they gave me more time than they normally would. At about 59 minutes, they get you out of there, but they told me I could spend the time I wanted to. The discussion with Pastor Brunson was really heart-wrenching. The reason it was heart-wrenching is he said: I just firmly believe that people are going to forget about me. I think Congress could read this 62-page bogus indictment and believe it is true.

I told Pastor Brunson that the only reason I was there was to look at him eye to eye and tell him Congress has his back. This is not going to go away until the Turkish people release Pastor Brunson. We did something here over the course of 2 weeks. I also told him, in that meeting, I was going to get Members of the Senate to sign on to a letter and was going to prove to him that the people in the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, agreed with my position that Pastor Brunson should be set free.

I know the Presiding Officer knows better than anybody that getting 66 Senators to sign on to a letter, if you spend 3 or 4 months doing it, is uncommon, but to get 66 Senators to come together and sign this letter in a couple of weeks is extraordinary. When they heard the argument, they knew they needed to be a part of the voice of the Senate. It is no coincidence that I wanted to get 60-plus votes. I wanted to send a very clear message that we are educating Members of the Senate, and we have the votes necessary to move forward with things I prefer not to do.

I prefer to be moving forward with legislation that strengthens the relationship with Turkey—our military alliances, our economic alliances—our broader relationship. Yet we also need to send a clear message that we will take other steps, if that is what is necessary, to get the attention of the Turkish administration and President Erdogan to do the right thing. I thank all my colleagues who signed the letter. Since we published it with 66, we have had others express interest, and I think that is very important.

Now what does President Erdogan say to that? He basically says that if

we are willing to trade with someone here in this country who he believes was involved in the plot, then he will give Pastor Brunson back to us.

We have an extradition treaty with Turkey. If Turkey goes through the proper processes that can prove the person he wants in this country should be extradited because he is guilty of laws broken in Turkey, great. But I find it objectionable to compare that pastor who is here or that religious leader who is here with a pastor who spent 20 years in Turkey doing nothing but missionary work.

When I was in Turkey, someone asked me: What do you think about the prisoner exchange? I think what has been offered is absurd. But I promise you this: If you know of a Turkish person—a Turkish national in a U.S. prison who was held for 17 months without charges and then was convicted on circumstantial evidence for 5 years, 10 years, or 35 years, count me in on getting them released without even a concept of trade because that would be a terrible miscarriage of justice.

Let me tell you, there is not somebody in a U.S. prison because there is no way that anybody in the United States would have been held overnight in jail for the charges I saw demonstrated in that courthouse just a week ago. So President Erdogan possibly doesn't know what I now know, having sat through 12 hours of court. I have to believe he is a fair person, and I have to believe that he is hearing from people in his administration who are not telling him what they are trying to do to this man in their Turkish judicial system. I am here, and I will be here every week to ask President Erdogan to invest the time that I have invested to know it is a miscarriage of justice that is going to hurt our relationship with Turkey on every level, and I will go from someone who is a strong advocate of our Turkish alliance to someone who maybe has to think twice about where this relationship goes from here.

This is the beginning of what I hope is a very short time of my coming to this floor and layering in additional facts every week until Pastor Brunson is released.

Again, I warn anyone who is going to Turkey to pay attention to what I have just said. Pay attention to the fact that I may not, as a U.S. Senator and the Presiding Officer, as a U.S. Senator from Iowa—we may not be able to guarantee your safety under the current emergency orders in Turkey. You may actually just find a group of friendly people with whom you take a picture and you proudly put it on Facebook because you are reaching out to people, you are traveling to countries, and you are trying to build friendships and relationships. But there may be some Turkish bureaucrat who sees that picture and sees a few Kurds in it, and suddenly you become a conspirator. You spend 565 days in a Turkish prison, and you have your Sen-

ator coming over there to take you out. That is what is going on in Turkey right now.

Pastor Brunson represents just one of several people in Turkey for whom we have to fight. A NASA scientist has been convicted and sentenced to 7½ years; he has served 1½ years. He was guilty of doing nothing more than going to visit his family in Turkey at roughly the time they started the coup attempt. Now he is in prison—an American citizen, a dual citizen, a Turkish-American, a NASA scientist imprisoned, implicated as being a part of our intelligence agency. I am not making this up.

I have invested the time in Turkey to follow the facts. I wouldn't pursue this if all I had were briefings from the State Department or the staff. I invested the time to go there, look at the pastor eye to eye, look at the judges eye to eye, and look at the prison guards eye to eye, and I am convinced this is a risk to every single American. Every single one of you should put yourself in Pastor Brunson's place and go from here and make sure people know what is going on there.

Pastor Brunson needs to know he has the backing of the U.S. Senate. He will have the backing of the House. My colleague MARK WALKER and the deputy whip PATRICK MCHENRY are working on a similar letter in the House, and we will continue to show that we are in shape, and we are ready to run this marathon. Hopefully, they are going to sprint to a just decision on May 7. That is his next court date. But if he doesn't, you can expect me to be here, and each and every time I am going to add some other cases for why we really have to rethink our relationship with Turkey until justice is done.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to express my opposition to Mike Pompeo serving as the Nation's top diplomat.

As I stated earlier this week in committee, I am generally disappointed to be casting a vote against a Secretary of State nominee. I believe the United States needs an effective leader on the global stage. But at the end of the day, as I considered Director Pompeo's nomination, including his hearing, his past statements, and recent revelations, I have lingering concerns along three broad themes. Mr. Pompeo failed to express any tangible diplomatic strategies for which he would advocate to advance American interests; he failed to be forthright with the committee; and, finally, I don't have a satisfactory answer to the question: Which Mike Pompeo am I asked to cast a vote on?

Unfortunately, during his nomination process, in which he had an opportunity to address all of these concerns, Director Pompeo offered contradictory statements and was less than forthcoming when pressed on a number of issues.

Given the opportunity to outline the strategies he would advocate with the administration to deal with the challenges of Russia, Iran, North Korea, China or Venezuela, to mention a few, he failed to exhibit the depth of knowledge or thoughtfulness about what those strategies would be. Granted, he is under the constraints of this administration, which has failed to offer a strategic vision for American diplomacy, a White House that has failed to effectively outline policies or strategies to achieve a series of ever-changing goals and objectives. But I expect our chief diplomat to have a vision for diplomacy.

A meeting is not a strategy. Air strikes are not a strategy. Unilaterally walking away from an international agreement is not a strategy.

Beyond his lack of strategies, I fear Mr. Pompeo was less than transparent through his confirmation process. Truthfulness and willingness to be forthcoming to the Foreign Relations Committee are essential in a Secretary of State nominee. But in his refusal to answer questions about the Russia investigation, in which he was interviewed—a critical issue before the committee—and in his failure to disclose any information about his trip to North Korea, which he could have disclosed even in a classified setting, although we got to learn about it through the press—both critical issues before the committee—he exhibited that he was more suited to the clandestine nature of the CIA Director than the transparency of a Secretary of State.

I don't expect a Cabinet Secretary to publicly disagree with the President; indeed, it is his or her duty to carry out the President's agenda. But as policies are being formulated, I remain skeptical of whether he will be forthcoming with Members of Congress, how he will approach complex issues, and what that means for our foreign policy.

This lack of forthrightness ultimately leaves me wondering whether he would be willing to push back against the President's worst instincts, whether he would be willing to say no to advance a different course or whether he would simply be a yes-man.

When the President blames Russia's aggressive behavior on Democrats—pretty amazing, on Democrats—will Director Pompeo remind him that Russia's aggressive behavior is caused by Russia and no one else? As our Nation's top diplomat, would Director Pompeo, as he said in his confirmation hearing, value diversity and demand every employee be “treated equally with dignity and respect”? Does he believe, as he said in his hearing, in “promoting America's ideals, values, and priorities,” including our collective identity as a nation of immigrants and refugees fleeing oppression who have made the United States a bastion of hope in the world? Or will we be represented by Congressman Pompeo, who voted against the Violence Against Women's

Act to deny support to victims of gender-based violence and who sponsored legislation to roll back marriage equality, or Congressman Pompeo, who, as recently as 2016, sponsored legislation to immediately halt refugee resettlement in the United States until ill-advised reforms were made? These concerns are beyond policy disagreements, which alone are not the basis for rejecting a nominee. Rather, this legislative history paints a troubling picture of how the United States and our diplomatic efforts will be conducted and received by our allies and adversaries alike.

Will the Department seek to roll back programs advancing women's access to healthcare and justice systems—programs that have significantly improved the lives not only of women all over the world but, by extension, improved stability, prosperity, and governance reforms? When we talk about promoting universal human rights in countries that seek to oppress people based on their sexual orientation, what will our Nation's top diplomat credibly say?

As we work with our allies who are absorbing literally millions of refugees from profoundly devastating crises all over the world and as families in my own State of New Jersey and throughout the country open their hearts and their homes, what will he credibly say as this administration slashes our own refugee program, once a crown jewel of our foreign policy, both in establishing our moral leadership and in supporting our partners globally?

On our own border, we simply cannot address the threat of drug traffickers or opioids without productive collaboration with Mexico. When the President wants to call Mexicans drug traffickers and rapists, as our Nation's top diplomat who, during his confirmation hearing, insisted his “record is exquisite with respect to treating people of every faith with the dignity they deserve,” would Mr. Pompeo advise the President not to call Mexicans drug traffickers and rapists or would the Pompeo who once called an Indian-American political opponent a “turban topper” prevail?

How would he explain this kind of rhetoric to people of myriad different faiths who wear turbans, whether they are millions of Sikhs, Punjabis, or Muslims in India—a critically important ally—or Orthodox Christians in the Horn of Africa or tribal leaders in Afghanistan with whom we are trying to build constructive relationships based on values of democracy and human rights?

What impact would his accusations that Muslim leaders in the United States are somehow “complicit” in devastating terrorist attacks have as he engages with Muslim leaders and citizens around the world? Nearly 2 billion people in the world adhere to the Muslim faith, many in countries with which we have relationships critical to protecting and promoting our national

security, with citizens who have suffered the most from brutal terrorism.

Similarly, part of the exceptionalism of the United States comes from the power of our diaspora communities, which serve as critical cultural and public diplomats to the rest of the world. How can someone who has made such derogatory and uninformed remarks conduct effective diplomacy?

As I have said before, I believe it is imperative for the Secretary of State to be forthright, to be someone with whom the American people and our allies can invest faith and trust, someone who will unequivocally champion our values to assert our global leadership.

Our global leadership comes from our investment in diplomacy and development as our primary policy drivers abroad. Unfortunately, I don't believe that Director Pompeo is someone who will always prioritize diplomacy over conflict, particularly in the context of the aggressive foreign policy voices growing around him. I am particularly concerned by his past comments on regime change in North Korea and Iran. Look, I abhor both regimes, but our national security is a little different.

While he said during his confirmation hearing that war is “the last resort,” Mr. Pompeo's past statements calling for military action and regime change in Iran, for example, will surely follow him as we work with our allies to build on multinational agreements to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. His offhand remarks about regime change in North Korea will be ever-present as we pursue negotiations to roll back North Korea's nuclear weapons program and seek dismantling.

With all of these concerns of mine, ultimately, I simply do not believe that Director Pompeo is someone who can genuinely represent all Americans and best promote American foreign policy interests. It is for these reasons, among others, that I will be voting against Director Pompeo. Let me be very clear. Despite what some of my other colleagues may believe or tell the press, this is not a vote in the name of political resistance to the President. I have voted for members of this President's Cabinet, from the Secretary of Defense, to the former Secretary of Homeland Security and now the President's Chief of Staff, to our Ambassador to the United Nations, to mention some.

I will never hesitate to agree with a sound policy or criticize a misguided one, regardless of which party is in the White House. I think history will certainly prove that and judge it to be true. I will always put patriotism and our national security interest over partisanship—always.

I also reject the notion that we should confirm a Secretary of State based on world events outside of our control, whether that be a NATO summit or a meeting with North Korea. Nobody forced the President to fire his former Secretary of State at the time

he did. And unless Kim Jong Un is unilaterally dictating the terms of our relations, we should wait until we have the appropriate people and dutiful preparation to achieve the success that we and the world need.

In closing, as we consider this nominee and the nominee for Germany who is also subject to cloture, let me be clear. Despite what the White House wants to claim, Democrats are not obstructing nominees through this body. The facts are simply not on their side. Of 172 positions at the State Department and USAID critical to advancing U.S. interests, the administration has failed to even nominate 77 of those positions, including 45 ambassadorial positions in critical countries, including South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, to mention a few. I could go on and on.

Lest we all forget, Republicans control the votes on the Senate floor. Republican leadership can bring up any nominee, once they have passed the committee, at any time. That is their prerogative.

The Founders recognized that an effective democracy needs coequal branches of government to operate in a system of checks and balances. The President has the right to nominate whomever he wants, but the Congress has a responsibility to ensure that person is best suited for the job at hand—we have already seen challenges to some of these nominees in that process—and in the case of our Secretary of State, one who will prioritize diplomacy instead of war and promote fundamental values.

If and when he is confirmed, as someone who has served on both the House and the Senate committees tasked with overseeing foreign policy administration, I am more than willing to work alongside the nominee to provide advice and input as he and the President seek to advance American interests and values on the global stage. I will, of course, in my capacity as ranking member, work alongside him in pursuit of comprehensive and coherent strategies that promote American interests. Despite my misgivings, I will always have an open door and seek opportunities to advance our shared objectives. We stand ready and willing to take any and all actions in the interest of peace, security, and all Americans. That has always been my North Star, and it will always be.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN, be allowed to make remarks for about 3 to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I stand here today to urge the very swift confirmation of my good friend, my former colleague, the current Director of the CIA, Mike Pompeo, to serve as America's next Secretary of State.

Mike's résumé would put him at the top of any pile. Speaking as someone who has hired a lot of folks over 28 years in the private sector and now spending time in public service, his résumé shines, but let's talk about his record of results.

I just returned from a trip to China. I was with four other U.S. Senators. We visited China, South Korea. In fact, while in South Korea, we went to the DMZ. I met the Premier of China while I was in Beijing. In fact, the same week that I met the Premier of China, Kim Jong Un met with President Xi in Beijing. We spent time with the Prime Minister of South Korea, as well as time with many other leaders. Their feedback was very clear. Perhaps this is the untold story we are not hearing in the United States, in the media, and it is this: The administration's resolve and their diplomacy is what has brought Kim Jong Un to the negotiating table.

The administration is moving forward toward a denuclearized North Korea, and Mike Pompeo has played a critical role in those efforts. As Secretary of State, Mike would continue to defend and represent American interests abroad, protecting our national security and making the world a safer place.

Mike has not just excelled, he has been the best at everything he has put his mind to over the course of his life. He was first in his class at West Point, a graduate of Harvard Law School, editor of the Harvard Law Review. He served our country in the military. He ran businesses before serving in the U.S. Congress, which is where my path crossed Mike Pompeo's, as we served as colleagues in the U.S. Congress. Mike has the résumé, the character, and the record of results to make him an exceptionally qualified leader for this job.

As we wait here in limbo without a Secretary of State, lives are on the line, our national security is on the line, and our freedom is on the line. I urge my colleagues across the aisle, please stop putting politics before America's national interests. For heaven's sake, this body passed Hillary Clinton through as Secretary of State with 94 votes. I urge them to make the best decision for our country and their constituents back home and join me in confirming Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Montana for the unanimous consent request.

CFPB ACTING DIRECTOR MULVANEY

This morning, the New York Times reported that Mick Mulvaney, the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—that is the Bureau that saved \$12 billion for 29 million American consumers who have been wronged, cheated, misled, deceived by banks and other financial service actors. Again, that is \$12 billion and 29 million consumers helped by the Consumer Financial Pro-

tection Bureau. Think about that for a second.

This morning, the New York Times reported that Mick Mulvaney, the head of that Bureau—the organization that looks out for or at least used to look out for American bank customers—made a speech to 1,300 bankers yesterday, and he told the banking industry to step up their lobbying efforts.

So you have a government official who took an oath to represent the American public to the best of his ability and to carry out his job to the best of his ability at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and he is going in front of bankers and telling them to step up their lobbying efforts to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The Times reported this, and there is a recording of this, so this isn't—as probably Mr. Mulvaney might suggest or the President will suggest—this isn't fake news. There is a real recording. He told banking industry executives on Tuesday that they should press lawmakers hard to pursue their agenda, and he revealed that, as a Congressman, he would meet with lobbyists only if they had contributed to his campaign.

Here is what the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said. He was a Member of Congress—a far-right, tea party, Republican Member of Congress who took a lot of bank contributions, I would add, but I will put that aside for a minute—until he became the head of the Office of Management and Budget and then of the Bureau. He said: “We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress.” That is when he served down the hall here at the other end of the Capitol in the U.S. Congress. “We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress,” he told 1,300 bankers and lending industry officials at the American bankers conference in Washington. He said:

We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress. If you're a lobbyist who never gave us money, I didn't talk to you. If you're a lobbyist who gave us money, I might talk to you.

I guess you can't call that bribery. I am not suggesting exactly that it is bribery. But you are saying: If you didn't give me money, I wouldn't talk to you, and if you gave me money, maybe I would talk to you.

Again, I am not a lawyer, and I don't think that is under the classification of bribery, but I think it is pretty awful. It is pretty awful when the guy who appointed you said he was going to clear the swamp. It is pretty awful when you have been elected by the people—in his case, of South Carolina—and you say: If you didn't give me money, I wouldn't talk to you, and if you gave me money, maybe I would talk to you. Can you believe that? This is a high-ranked, U.S. Government official who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate—at least for the first job at the Office of Management and Budget. Deciding who you will meet with based on campaign contributions is the kind of pay-to-play

that makes Americans furious with Washington, DC.

President Trump got elected because he was going to drain the swamp. President Trump got elected because he said the system was rigged. President Trump got elected because he doesn't want this pay-to-play. President Trump got elected because this place needs to be cleaned out. Then he appoints somebody to be the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau who only really wants to talk to you if you gave him campaign money, which is fundamentally what he said.

If the policy at his congressional office has been his policy at OMB and his policy at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, it has corrupted all of his work. It is hard to believe otherwise. Mr. Mulvaney should resign. He should resign.

Mr. Mulvaney should release his schedule since he has been head of the Bureau. One of the functions of the U.S. Senate, of either party, regardless of the President, is to oversee what exactly is happening in the executive branch of government, and I think it is important that we see Mr. Mulvaney's schedule. Who is he meeting with? What kind of contributions did they make to him when he was a Congressman? Is he directing money to the Senate majority or to the House majority Members to help Speaker RYAN? Is he sending money to political candidates who have been his allies in trying to emasculate the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau?

Mr. Mulvaney should resign. He should release his schedule. The White House should quickly nominate a permanent CFPB Director with bipartisan support and, may I suggest, a moral compass. I will say that again. The White House should quickly nominate a permanent Director of the Bureau with bipartisan support and a moral compass. Banks and payday lenders already have armies of lobbyists on their side; they don't need one more.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Texas.

CORRECTIONS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this afternoon, the House Judiciary Committee will begin to consider their version of a bill I have introduced here in the Senate with the junior Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, called the CORRECTIONS Act. This legislation addresses prison reform—an issue at the forefront of how justice is administered in this country—by focusing on reducing rates of recidivism, or repeat offenders, and ensuring that those reentering society can become productive members of our communities without threatening the crime rate.

Our efforts here are important, as reoffense rates in our country remain at high levels. In other words, our criminal justice system has become a revolving door, with reoffense rates of more than 75 percent for State pris-

oners and nearly 50 percent for Federal prisoners. So there is a 75-percent chance that somebody who goes to State prison will end up going back and a 50-percent chance that a Federal prisoner will end up going back unless we do something about it.

In law school, students are taught that the bedrock principles of our criminal justice system are deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. The reality is that somewhere along the way, we forgot about rehabilitation, and our prisons have literally become a warehouse for people who have been convicted of criminal offenses. That reality is part of the reason that my State of Texas and several other States have led the way not just to be tough on crime but to be smart on crime too.

Texas focused on the important role rehabilitation can play by implementing statewide prison reforms to help offenders learn to overcome the reasons they went to prison in the first place—whether it is a drug or alcohol habit or an addiction, whether it is simply being unprepared to enter the workforce because they dropped out of school or, perhaps, they have some sort of learning disability.

By using recidivism reduction programs like job training or alcohol and drug rehabilitation and letting prisoners go to school while they are in prison to earn a GED or to learn a marketable skill, Texas has reduced its incarceration rate and crime rate by double digits at the same time. Let me say that again. We have reduced our incarceration rate and our crime rate by double digits at the same time.

The end all and be all, in my view, of our criminal justice system must be to reduce the crime rate. In other words, whatever else we do, if the crime rate doesn't go down, we are not getting it right. As a result of the State-based reforms that I am talking about, we have actually been able to reduce incarceration rates and crime rates too.

I must say that when we talk about rehabilitation of prisoners, we are not talking about something we do to them. They have to want it. They have to want to turn their lives around, and they have to take advantage of the opportunities we provide them to do so, because that sort of personal transformation requires extraordinary commitment. Again, it is not something the government can do to somebody. They need to do it for themselves with the help we provide.

By doing so, we found that we can save billions of dollars for taxpayers, and we spared countless victims from further criminal activity. You have to wonder, from the time somebody comes out of prison to the time they reoffend and go back, how many crimes have they committed? How many people's lives have changed forever?

Finally, when they get apprehended for committing a crime, we tend to look at that in isolation, but the truth is, for people who live lives of crimi-

nality, this is what they do full time. They commit numerous crimes against property and against people. If we can reduce the crime rate, we can help them get back on their feet and become productive members of society, and we can save money at the same time. It strikes me that this is a pretty good deal.

For years I have tried to bring the successful State-based experiments and models to Washington, DC. That is why I felt it was important to reintroduce the bipartisan CORRECTIONS Act with the junior Senator from Rhode Island. Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, my cosponsor of this legislation, and I have very different perspectives on the world. He is a Democrat. I am a Republican. I am a conservative, and I would say he is at least a liberal. I don't know if maybe he would call himself a progressive. The fact is that we tried this and it works. Rather than having the Federal Government and the entire country be a laboratory for experimentation when it comes to things like this, isn't it better to let the States do what they always were conceived of being capable of doing, which is to be the laboratories of democracy? See what works and then take those successful experiments and scale them up so the whole Nation can benefit—that is what this legislation does.

This bill requires the Department of Justice to develop assessment tools that will assess the recidivism risk on all eligible offenders. In other words, we are not going to give hardcore multiple offenders—violent criminals—the benefit of these programs. What we will do is to start with the low-risk and moderate-risk offenders. We have scientific tools, tests, and the like that can help us make better decisions on who ought to be eligible and who should not.

We also shift the Federal Bureau of Prisons resources toward those most likely to commit future crimes. In other words, if we take low-level and mid-level offenders and we give them a way out to turn their lives around and become productive and we reduce the crime rate, that gives us more opportunity to focus on the hardcore violent criminals that are the greatest threat to our communities across the board. Focusing on less restrictive conditions for lower risk inmates and focusing on the hardcore violent criminals gives us a chance to concentrate our efforts on the people most likely to commit future crimes and to reoffend.

Our bill requires the Bureau of Prisons to partner with private organizations, including ones that are not-for-profit or faith-based, to promote recidivism reduction. We have had some very successful programs in Texas where religious organizations will go into the prisons and offer people a chance, not only to learn the skills they need in order to succeed on the outside but to turn their lives around by recognizing a higher power in their life. This is the

sort of experience that causes many people's lives to be transformed forever. Again, it is not because of something government does to them but because of what they embraced and have done for themselves.

I am more encouraged than ever that we will see some positive momentum on prison reform as the President and some of his closest advisers see prison reform as a top priority. Jared Kushner, the President's son-in-law, had a piece today—I believe it was in the *Wall Street Journal*—talking about this initiative. He has been a great partner, working with House colleagues and Senate colleagues to try to make this a priority, as well as urging the President and the Attorney General to do so as well.

Earlier this year, the President held an important meeting on this subject after 6 months of exploring the issue with his team. Attorney General Sessions attended, as did my friend and fellow Texan Brooke Rollins, the head of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, whose Right on Crime Program has been on the leading edge of those prison reforms in Texas and, then, taking that message nationwide. That meeting with the President was very productive.

In my discussions with colleagues and at the White House since that time, what we have repeatedly come back to is the idea of taking those success stories at the State level and scaling them up into a Federal reform package.

Our State began this effort back in 2007. A number of States have done the same thing. Over the last decade, we closed or consolidated multiple prisons, saving significant taxpayer dollars. The crime rate has fallen Statewide, even while our State's population has exploded during that same period of time. Something is clearly working back home in the Lone Star State. It has worked in places like North Carolina, where the Presiding Officer played an important role in the reforms in his State, as speaker of the house. It has worked in places like Rhode Island and Georgia, just to name a few.

That is part of the reason why prison reform has enjoyed such broad bipartisan support. It is an issue that unites liberals and conservatives around shared principles of saving money, reducing crime, and successfully reintegrating our citizens into society upon release.

I believe in the essential dignity of every human life. If there is a human life we can help salvage by giving people access to some of these programs and by changing the way we look at incarceration as—not just a warehouse where we put people, but also by providing people who are willing to take advantage of these programs the opportunity to turn their life around—it strikes me that we are giving people a second chance. It seems to me like the right and just thing to do.

Are we going to be able to save everybody? I am not naive enough to think that we are going to be able to save everybody. Some people are simply going to have to be incarcerated and kept off the streets so our communities can be safe, but that is not true for everybody. Looking at low-level and mid-level offenders, doing the sort of risk assessments I am talking about, giving them access to these programs where they themselves can turn their lives around while making our communities safe, and giving them an opportunity for a second chance and to save money—that strikes me as something we need to do.

Every day we fail to act on this issue we allow our prisons in the United States to become more bloated, more inefficient, and more wasteful. State and local governments spend more than \$200 billion a year on criminal justice, and a large fraction of that is spent on locking people up. I know there are some people who think we ought to lock them up and throw away the key, but that doesn't happen. People get out after a few years. The question is, Are they going to be prepared to reenter lawful society or will they simply go back to the same old lifestyle, reoffend, and end up back in prison?

There are even more consequential and less tangible costs on our communities when people continue to reoffend, because they don't find a way out of their life of crime. There is the cost on strained and broken families, on lost incomes and savings, on children who have to grow up without one or both parents. Those are some of the collateral damages of our criminal justice system when we don't take advantage of commonsense, proven reforms like I am talking about.

When people go to jail, the ripple impact affects all of us. It affects all of our families, all of our friends, and all of our neighborhoods. Some people need to go to jail. They need to stay there to pay for their crime and to be separated or segregated from law-abiding society to keep our communities safe.

Again, if we can help address the problems by expanding programming like substance abuse treatment and vocational training, which have been proven to reduce recidivism, these programs can help break the vicious cycle of imprisonment. For people who want a better life but simply have not found a way out of it, by investing in programs that focus on job training, education, drug rehabilitation, and mental health treatment, we can save taxpayer dollars and lower crime and incarceration rates and decrease recidivism.

More importantly, in the end, I think we can help people to change their lives for the better. We can give them hope and give them some opportunity and let them accept the power of transforming their lives and the promise that provides to them and to all of us.

I applaud the administration and the Attorney General's efforts to refocus our criminal justice reforms on the prison reform issue and for their work so far. I am encouraged by Speaker RYAN's meeting with members of the President's staff last week and by the House Judiciary's action starting today. I know it will not end today, but they are taking up a version that closely mirrors the CORRECTIONS Act, which I have addressed in these remarks.

I also greatly appreciate the leadership of my cosponsor, Senator WHITEHOUSE. I know that other people have other ideas—perhaps about sentencing reform and the like—but in this political environment, I am for doing what we can do rather than spinning our wheels being frustrated about things we can't do because there is simply not the political support in the House, the Senate, and at the White House to get it done.

The prison reform bill, I believe—the CORRECTIONS Act—is the way to go. I am looking forward to working with all of my colleagues in the House and the Senate, as well as the President, to get this done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I am glad to be here today to be on the Senate floor to rise to urge my colleagues to confirm Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

The Senate is an institution built on history and tradition. We hear that quite a bit as we walk the halls, particularly where it comes to confirmations.

Confirming the President's Cabinet, confirming judges, confirming a Supreme Court Justice, I think, is one of the greatest honors that we enjoy as Senators.

Recent Secretaries of State have enjoyed strong bipartisan support from this Chamber during their own confirmation process. Hillary Clinton was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. John Kerry was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 3. These are overwhelming, bipartisan votes, and it is not because everybody in this Chamber agrees with everything Secretary Clinton or Secretary Kerry would have done on most of the foreign policy questions. The result is the Senate's strong tradition of confirming qualified nominees to represent the United States on the world stage. This very crucial position, Secretary of State, gives the President his or her voice around the world in the diplomatic realm. But when it comes to the confirmation of this nominee, Mike Pompeo, many of my colleagues have

seemed way too ready to brush aside this long-held tradition. What is the reason for this? I think you would agree with me—the reason is pretty obvious—that it is just flat-out partisanship. Partisanship is the only explanation because it certainly could not be, is not, and will not be the nominee's qualifications.

We have all heard Mike Pompeo's résumé by now. His list of experience and accomplishments make him more than qualified to serve as this Nation's top diplomat. I think some of his qualifications are worth repeating.

He was first in his class at West Point. He was a cavalry officer in the U.S. Army and served honorably. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School. He was an editor of the Harvard Law Review and the Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy.

After law school, Mike worked at one of the country's very prestigious and top law firms before he cofounded a company where he served as CEO. He then joined another company where, again, he served as the CEO.

That was all before Mike was elected to serve four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, where I was very fortunate, in my years as a U.S. Congresswoman, to serve and work alongside him and to call him my colleague.

During his time in Congress, he served on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Just on the title alone, "Permanent Select"—it is a committee selected by the Speaker and the minority leader—you know that it is extremely important because it deals with all of the Nation's intelligence.

We know that after he left that position as a Congressman, he became President Trump's Director of the CIA. By all accounts and by all reports, he has done an absolutely exceptional job. He revitalized the morale within the CIA and put us on even footing on one of our core missions.

I think it is an impressive list of qualifications that he has, especially when you compare some of our previous Secretaries of State.

I would ask the question: What does it take for a military officer, a lawyer, a CEO, a Congressman, and now a CIA Director to get one Democratic vote out of committee? Why is there such pushback on such a qualified nominee? I believe it is because of a partisan campaign to obstruct. We have seen it on other nominations and certainly on this one.

This sort of obstruction does not help our government function. It doesn't help the career folks over at the State Department do their job—and they are ready. It doesn't help our country lead on the global stage, and it certainly doesn't help the people we serve.

This is an important time in our Nation's history, particularly around the world. You and I just heard the French President—the Chief Executive—talk about the needs of Europe and his views on terrorism and America's place

as a world leader. Now, more than ever, we need a strong and qualified Secretary of State. We need a leader to negotiate with North Korea. These negotiations are coming up rapidly, and we know that Mike Pompeo has already developed a relationship.

We need him to counter the Russian aggression we see cropping up in other areas all around this globe. We need a strong leader to address the chemical weapons situation in Syria, as tragic as it is. The list could go on and on.

And do you know what? Mike Pompeo is up to this job, and we should give it to him. We should give it to him in this Chamber by confirmation.

The American people want Washington to work. They want us to work together. They want us to work as a team. That is how we are set up. So how can that happen if the President can't even get the opportunity to put his own team in place?

I am going to vote for Mike Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State because I want the President to have his team. I want the Nation to have a strong leader. I want our State Department to be functioning as fully, as vibrantly, and as aggressively as we can around the world in these dangerous times.

With that, I urge my colleagues to put partisanship aside and confirm Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise to join the Presiding Officer and others who have been on the floor hoping that we will move this week to support the confirmation of Mike Pompeo, who has been nominated to be the Secretary of State.

It is a critically important time for the country. I think we heard this morning in a joint meeting from the President of France the importance of our country and those who agree with our defense of freedom and security to stand up for that. There are threats all over the globe, and certainly everybody realizes that Mike Pompeo, the current Director of the CIA, would have the knowledge he needs to do the job. He clearly has the experience he needs to do the job, and he has the support of the President, whom he would be representing.

Historically, this body, until recent years, always dealt with foreign policy as if we were sure that bipartisanship starts at the water's edge and partisanship ends at the water's edge. That long tradition was always evident, particularly in the Secretary of State's job and confirming people to important

positions that relate to our national security.

John Kerry was confirmed as Secretary of State by a vote of 94 to 3. Hillary Clinton was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. Condoleezza Rice received 85 votes when she was confirmed, and Colin Powell was confirmed unanimously. That is the tradition the country has always set for this job.

My colleague from New York Senator SCHUMER said in 2013—and this is an exact quote: "Who in America doesn't think a President, Democrat or Republican, deserves his or her picks for who should run these agencies? Nobody." That is end of that quote. That is the answer to his own question. Apparently, that is no longer the answer to that question on the part of Senator SCHUMER and others.

Senator Kerry, and later Secretary of State Kerry, said in 2009:

It is essential that we provide the President with the tools and resources he needs to effect change. That starts by making sure he has the national security team he has chosen in place as soon as possible.

Secretary Kerry and Secretary Clinton were not confirmed because Republicans agreed with every single one of their policy positions. They weren't confirmed because their colleagues in the Senate agreed with every one of their votes. They were confirmed because they were qualified to do the job, and the President, who had nominated them, deserved to have his team in place to carry out the policies he had been elected to carry out.

Now the same standard should be extended to Director Pompeo, who is eminently qualified for the job. Director Pompeo graduated first in his class at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1986, and he served as a cavalry officer patrolling the Iron Curtain before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After leaving Active Duty, Director Pompeo graduated from Harvard Law School where he edited the Harvard Law Review. This is a man of great accomplishment before he entered politics.

In addition to those things, he also ran two successful businesses before he was elected to the House of Representatives in 2010. He served in the House from 2010 to 2017. He was a member of the Intelligence Committee. In that role, he was at the forefront of information that is important to national security, ranging from the Iran nuclear accord to the PATRIOT Act. He understands these issues. He is a person of significant capacity. Again, maybe most important of all the qualifications, he was picked by the President of the United States who, after this time of working together with Director Pompeo as the Director of the CIA, the President should know exactly what he is getting, and, frankly, we should too.

President Trump decided to not only nominate Director Pompeo to be the Director of National Security, but when he was sworn in—when he was confirmed, before he was sworn in, 66

to 32 was the vote. Fourteen Senate Democrats, most of them still here—if not, they may all still be here—voted for Mike Pompeo to be the Director of the CIA. I would say he is more qualified today to be Secretary of State than he was then to be the Director of the CIA because not only has he done everything he has done up until then, but he has understood, from the unique perspective of the CIA, the foreign policy and the intelligence challenges we face every day.

He has taken the responsibilities seriously. He has briefed the President over and over again. The President knows exactly what he is getting and Director Pompeo should know exactly whom he is working for.

SENATE RULES ON NOMINATIONS

Given the numerous challenges we face here and around the globe, it is important that we swiftly confirm not just Mike Pompeo but the President's other nominees. Many of these positions still remain vacant because our colleagues across the aisle have, frankly, wasted hours and days obstructing the confirmation process. It is way beyond any normal way that this has been approached.

Right now, we are in the middle of a 30-hour debate. I don't see that many people debating. We had a big debate yesterday—at least time was reserved—at the insistence of the minority. I think the debate was about 28 minutes out of the 20 hours between the time the nominee could have been voted on, and he would have gotten the same number of votes he got almost 20 hours later, after 28 minutes of debate.

President Trump's nominees have faced 88 cloture votes. That is the time we are in now, where we have a cloture vote and then we have this long period of time for theoretical debate that doesn't occur. Those nominees have faced 28 cloture votes compared to 24 total cloture votes in the first entire 2 years of the 6 previous Presidents combined. So there was an average of four cloture votes for those Presidents in their first 2 years. President Trump has had 88 cloture votes in less than a year and a half.

Something is happening differently than has ever happened before. It takes an average of 85 days for the President's nominees to be confirmed once they get to the Senate, 20 days longer than President Obama's nominees. The other difference with President Obama's nominees is, we didn't stop all the work in the Senate during the 60 days that we were having hearings, getting the nomination ready for the floor. We didn't do exactly what we are doing right now, which is fully taking advantage of every right the minority has to insist on debate. The only thing missing in that debate is the debate. At the rate we are going, it would take more than 9 years to confirm all of the President's nominees. This would be 9 years of his 4-year term. If he didn't nominate anybody else, this would be longer than the President would have if

he were elected to two terms. It is unacceptable. It is ridiculous. It denies the President that counsel he needs of senior leaders, but it also denies the Senate the floor time it needs to deal with the issues.

If people have watched the Senate in the last several years, and particularly if you have watched it over the last several months, the quorum call that we so often have—the one I suggested we remove ourselves from—is what you see when you turn on the Senate because we are waiting for a vote to happen, the debate of which does not occur.

So, later today, the Rules Committee I chair will be considering Senator LANKFORD's legislation to address these delays in the confirmation process. All Senator LANKFORD's resolution does is to make permanent the same rules Senate Democrats agreed to in 2013, when they were in the majority. While they were in the majority, a majority of Republicans and Democrats all agreed we would confirm President Obama's nominees with debate that more nearly met the likely debate for that office.

Senator LANKFORD's resolution would simply reduce debate for most executive branch offices from 30 hours down to 8 hours and for district judges from 30 hours to 2 hours. By the way, we don't have to use those 2 hours or those 8 hours either. If there is no debate, we should always move to the vote, but at least the debate time still gives the minority the protection that traditionally they have had. When you abuse the minority protections in the Senate, that is when those protections tend to go away.

The resolution still would have 30 hours of debate for the Supreme Court, for circuit courts, the courts of appeal for all the district courts, and for Cabinet-level nominees.

We are not opposed to debating nominees and really debating them. I think the opposition here is we are opposed to not debating and using up time simply as a delay tactic, where the result would be the same, whether you voted in 30 minutes or 30 hours.

Now, remember, this is the same framework the Senate passed by a vote of 78 to 16 in 2013. Fifty-two Democrats voted in favor of this exact same resolution in 2013, including the current minority leader. Senator LANKFORD's proposal would make that framework permanent. It would allow the Senate to expedite the confirmation process for the President's well-qualified nominees. It would also allow the Senate to get to the other work that the American people expect the Senate to do and have every reason to expect the Senate to do.

So, today and tomorrow, we will continue this process of waiting for the vote on the nominee to be Secretary of State; again, a vote that, prior to recent times, would have occurred right after the report was out and Members knew what they were going to do. So,

hopefully, we will begin to look at these rules and our work more seriously.

REMEMBERING TED VAN DER MEID

Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to Ted Van Der Meid, a longtime House of Representatives leadership staff member, who died of pancreatic cancer on March 19.

For the 10 years before Ted left the Congress, I worked with him every day the Congress was in session. He was a great public servant. Ted was emblematic of the professional staff that we count on here in the Senate and across the Rotunda in the House of Representatives. His dedication to the Constitution, the Congress, and democracy guided his work.

Ted didn't seek personal glory or seek to accumulate vast wealth. Instead, he woke up every day working to make the Congress a better and safer place for the American people.

He served as a staff member for several Members, including Jan Meyers and Lynn Martin, before serving as the general counsel to House Republican Leader Bob Michel where he worked on Congressional reform initiatives.

After leaving Leader Michel's office, he served as the chief counsel for the Ethics Committee.

When Denny Hastert became Speaker of the House, Ted became his chief of floor operations and chief legal counsel. In a wide portfolio, Van Der Meid coordinated with the House majority leader on all floor activities. He also was in charge of the institutional operations for the Speaker.

That institutional responsibility became especially important in the context of the 9/11 attacks.

It was Ted who drove the completion of the Visitor's Center that not only made the Congress more accessible to the American people, but also made the Capitol a safer and more secure place for the visitors and for those who come to work here every day. Ted was also involved in the potentially critical continuity of government discussions that overshadowed other concerns in 2002.

When Ted retired from the Congress, he eventually went to work for the Pew Charitable Trust, where once again he devoted his time in seeking to make this institution work better for the American people. In particular, he helped to establish forums where staff from a diverse set of Members got to know each other in more causal settings. It was Ted's view that the better staff and Members knew one another, the better they could find common ground and make progress on behalf of the voters.

Ted was taken away from us much too early. He fought the good fight and always thought about how he could make this Congress and this country a better place for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the nomination of Mike

Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State.

By now, we have all heard about Director Pompeo's accomplishments: first in his class at West Point, U.S. Army officer, graduate of Harvard Law School, editor of the Harvard Law Review, successful businessman, and Member of Congress. It is rare that a nominee to this position has had so many diverse accomplishments.

Some of my colleagues who are opposed to Director Pompeo argue that he will not deliver tough messages to the President or outline all of the policy options. They argue that Director Pompeo is a hawk who would prefer armed conflict to diplomacy. I find these comments disappointing. That has not been my personal experience with Director Pompeo. In addition, military officers are frequently the last ones to seek a military solution to a foreign policy challenge because they know firsthand the cost of war. On the other hand, they also know that without strength, no amount of diplomacy will be able to stop an authoritarian dictator.

I believe Director Pompeo's recent trip to North Korea highlights how effective and committed he is to pursuing diplomatic opportunities. He not only defended core U.S. interests, but he also moved the United States and North Korea closer to negotiations. Maximum pressure, combined with a willingness to talk, is working right now.

I also want to address the issue of communication with Congress. I have heard claims about information not being shared with the Hill. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I have worked with Director Pompeo regularly and can personally vouch for his accessibility and candor. Having worked with a number of CIA Directors over the years on the Intelligence Committee, I can personally attest that Director Pompeo is at the top of the class for being open and straightforward.

I would also like to address the issue of bipartisanship. Since coming to the Senate a decade ago, I have had the chance to vote for three Secretaries of State. Mr. Pompeo will be my fourth. In each case, I have supported the President's nominee to serve as Secretary of State. President Obama's choices for Secretary of State would certainly not have been my choices. In the case of Secretaries Clinton and Kerry, there were numerous issues where we had substantial disagreements. I believed that as to the Secretary of State, however, the President was entitled to deference as to his choice, and that choice deserved bipartisan support because their credibility as the top diplomat is strengthened by bipartisan support.

Another important factor is that, with Secretary Pompeo, world leaders will know that he speaks directly on behalf of the President—something that has been an issue in the past. This quality is very, very important for a Secretary of State.

Director Pompeo is more than qualified to serve as Secretary of State. In fact, at this point, because of his service at the CIA, Director Pompeo is uniquely positioned to be a very successful Secretary of State. No other place in our government provides more insight into the inner workings of other countries than the work of our intelligence agencies. The CIA is certainly one of the top intelligence agencies, and Director Pompeo, in his service, has had access to and indeed directed the work of the CIA and has a very deep and profound understanding of the other nations in the world, and that applies particularly to the troubled spots in the world. He is uniquely qualified because of this experience to serve as Secretary of State.

We have often used the phrase "politics ends at the water's edge" to signal that our domestic political differences do not erode our diplomats' strength overseas. I hope that this vote does not change what has been a longstanding goal for our diplomatic efforts.

I urge my colleagues to thoughtfully consider support for Director Pompeo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what has happened to the State Department under this administration is almost impossible to imagine. What we are seeing there is a devastation and a decimation of the resources of a great part of our government, one of the most important parts. It is a small percentage of our budget, but the work done by the State Department is critically important in maintaining the position of the United States around the world, projecting our image—our values—where we can, helping the helpless in parts of the world where many countries come to their aid.

Under this administration in the last year, we have seen things happen that are unimaginable. When it gets down to the basics, key posts are unfilled at the State Department. There are more than 30 vacancies in ambassadorial positions. Don't blame Congress for it. In many cases, they have not even sent us the names of the nominees.

Can anyone here believe that we still do not have an ambassador from the Trump administration to South Korea? South Korea? We spend time talking about the Korean Peninsula and the future of the Korean Peninsula, and this President cannot find an ambassador to represent the United States in South Korea. What is the possible explanation for this? He can't blame anyone but himself. He has not sent us a nominee to even consider.

We are faced with a nuclear-armed North Korean dictator. We have 28,000 American U.S. military personnel who are literally risking their lives in

South Korea, and we don't have a diplomat on the scene to try to make sure that the United States is well represented.

The Department is also hemorrhaging top staff. Under Secretary Tom Shannon—one of the most respected—is scheduled to leave soon. It is no surprise this is happening. President Trump has repeatedly proposed dramatic, irresponsible cuts in the budget of the Department of State. His administration has kept top diplomats out of key discussions and deliberations. How, at a time of such international unrest in this dangerous world we live in, can we be diminishing and demoralizing our topline diplomats? How can that be a smart way to keep America safe?

I have been hoping someone would come along to right the ship at the State Department—someone to draw on this amazing reservoir of American talent in the areas of diplomacy and foreign policy, someone to make sure our best diplomatic efforts are projected to prevent conflict and to further American interests, someone who could be a proud face of America around the world.

It was in this context and with this challenge that I met with Mike Pompeo. He and I have met and had serious and challenging discussions before, notably when he was nominated to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. We met again a few weeks ago. It was a good, candid conversation. He seemed to understand the desperate situation at the State Department and that the State Department's top experts should be included in key administration discussions.

This conversation left me in the same place, I believe, that Senator MENENDEZ pondered at the end of Pompeo's Foreign Relations Committee hearing: Who is the real Mike Pompeo?

You see, I find it hard to square the reasonable man I met with the other day with some of his actions and comments. For example, has Michael Pompeo completely renounced the use of torture? He said he would not obey an order from the President to use torture. Let me add it is tragic that we have a President who brags about using such illegal, abhorrent, and un-American approaches, but we still have to worry about this. Contrast that with Mr. Pompeo's previous defense of waterboarding or his jarring comments about the 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee's torture report when he said "Senator Feinstein [today] has put American lives at risk" and that the intelligence operatives whose acts were scrutinized were "heroes, not pawns in some liberal game being played by the ACLU and Senator Feinstein."

Or what about Mr. Pompeo's association with prominent anti-Muslim figures in the United States, like Frank Gaffney? The Southern Poverty Law Center calls Mr. Gaffney one of America's most notorious Islamophobes. For

example, Gaffney favors congressional hearings to unmask subversive Muslim conspiracies and was even banned from the far-right Conservative Political Action Conference events after accusing two of its organizers of being agents of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet Mr. Pompeo appeared on Mr. Gaffney's radio show at least 24 times between 2013 and 2016.

What about when Mr. Pompeo used his position on the House Intelligence Committee to accuse then-Secretary of State Clinton of orchestrating a wide-ranging coverup of the Benghazi attacks that ended in the tragic loss of American lives in Libya? Is there anyone here who believes for a minute that was not a political witch hunt, which in part led to the further discrediting of the critical congressional committee involved—a committee that, incidentally, has lost all legitimacy in the current investigation over Russia's involvement in our election?

I face this decision on Mr. Pompeo with real concern. There are many policy issues on which Mr. Pompeo and I might disagree, notably on the Iran nuclear agreement. I asked him point-blank: What do you think is going to happen to this nuclear agreement to stop the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon?

His conjecture was that this President would walk away from it and hope that our European allies, who also signed on to this agreement, would enforce it. Does that sound like a cogent foreign policy for a leader in the world like the United States?

Our Nation desperately needs someone to bring leadership to the State Department, but torture, Islamophobia, and wild political conspiracy theories don't seem to mesh with being our Nation's top diplomat from where I am standing.

I will vote against Mr. Pompeo's nomination. I sincerely hope I am wrong about this nominee. I believe he will be approved by a very small margin. I hope he will, in the end, uphold our Nation's laws and values when it comes to torture, tolerance, and international cooperation. I hope he will make sure diplomacy is exhausted before we turn to yet another war and, in particular, that he will resist John Bolton and others who are notorious for wanting to rush into military conflict. I hope he will listen carefully to Secretary Mattis at the Defense Department—someone I supported and someone I trust. I hope he will be clear to this President, as the man who is the Secretary of State in his administration, that climate change and Russia are truly threats to our Nation and well-being. Doing this will help strengthen America's leadership abroad and help build greater trust and cooperation in Congress.

DACA

Mr. President, on September 5, the Trump administration announced its repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as

DACA. As a result, hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to the United States as children, toddlers, and infants—known as Dreamers—face losing their right to stay here without being subject to deportation and the right to legally work in America.

DACA provides temporary legal status for Dreamers if they register with the government, pay a substantial fee, go through a criminal background check, and return every 2 years for renewal. It has been a great success. More than 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection.

When President Trump repealed DACA 7 months ago, he set an arbitrary March 5 deadline of this year for Congress to act and replace it. We tried. We offered to this President six different bipartisan alternatives to continue the DACA Program. He rejected every single one of them. He sent to Congress his own plan for dealing with immigration. It received 39 votes in the U.S. Senate—39. Remember, there is a Republican majority of 51. The President struggled to get his own party to support his ideas on immigration.

Luckily, a Federal court stepped in and issued an order blocking President Trump's repeal of DACA. This means those Dreamers who have DACA can continue to apply for renewed status. I certainly urge every DACA recipient to file for renewal as quickly as possible. There was a ruling yesterday, as well, in one of the DC district courts which also said that perhaps the President's actions on DACA can be questioned, and he gave the government 90 days to produce evidence of what authority the President used to reach that conclusion.

The Trump administration is doing everything in its power to fight this injunction, and it could be lifted any day. We don't know when the courts will turn and make a decision. This means there is still an urgent need for Congress to act to overcome the decision of the President of the United States of last September 5.

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security released updated statistics on DACA. It shows, as of March 31, more than 32,000 DACA renewal applications are pending. Of these pending renewal applications, more than 9,000 were from recipients whose DACA protection had already expired, and tens of thousands more Dreamers have DACA protection due to expire very soon.

The President has created chaos, not just in the White House but clearly at the Department of Homeland Security as they try to respond to his decisions. Secretary Nielsen of DHS has promised me and has said publicly that she will not be party to deporting any DACA recipient with a pending DACA application, even if their DACA status has expired. We will hold her to that commitment.

However, for DACA recipients whose status has expired, they are not going to be given any work permits while

their renewal applications are being considered. It means tens of thousands of DACA-eligible individuals could be forced to leave the jobs they have—such as teachers in our schools or even in our military—because of the chaos that has been created by President Trump's decision.

Consider the fate of Dreamers who are eligible for DACA but have never quite reached that status. Until this decision is made in the court hearing in the District of Columbia, they can no longer apply for DACA protection because of President Trump's decision to prohibit new applications after September 5 of last year.

The nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute estimates that—in addition to 800,000 DACA recipients—there are an additional 1 million Dreamers who are eligible for DACA. President Trump's cruel decision to end DACA means that some 1 million DACA-eligible people cannot even apply.

On September 5, President Trump called on Congress to legalize DACA. As I mentioned, he has refused to accept six different bipartisan approaches that would. He even rejected one approach that offered \$25 billion for his infamous wall on the Mexican border. Instead, the President has tried to put the entire hard-line immigration agenda on the backs of DACA recipients.

It is not working, for 85 percent of the American people are on the side of these young people who were brought to the United States as kids, children, infants who grew up in this country, pledging allegiance to that flag, and wanting to be part of our future. There are 85 percent of Americans, including many Trump voters, who believe that is the right and fair thing to do, but a handful of hard-liners in this administration are determined to exact a punishment on these young people and their parents. That is why we find ourselves in this situation today.

I have come to the floor more than 100 times to tell the individual stories of these Dreamers. I do that today as well.

This is Karina Macias. She is the 114th Dreamer whose story I have told on the floor.

At the age of 3, her family brought her to the United States from Mexico. She grew up in East Palo Alto in Northern California. She loved to read and spend her afterschool time and summers at the local Boys & Girls Club. Karina was an excellent student, and she received numerous awards in high school, including the Mount Holyoke Book Award, the AP Scholar Award, and a Rotary Club Academic Achievement Award. She was the co-editor of her yearbook and copresident of the Community Service Club. She volunteered as a tutor and worked as a volunteer in food distribution centers. She attended Saint Mary's College of California, where she continued to excel academically and to receive many awards. In May 2016, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in communications.

She works today as a project manager at a biotechnology firm. She volunteers with the Peninsula College Fund, where she organizes career development and college success workshops. She tutors elementary students and mentors middle school youth who compete in local science competitions.

What is her dream for the future? She wants to pursue an advanced degree so she can become a biotechnology researcher.

Here is what she wrote in a letter to me:

DACA is my hope for a future in which, with hard work and perseverance, I can achieve any dream imaginable. It's my protection from being ripped away from the only place I've known as home. It's the promise to my baby brothers—both U.S. Citizens—that I'll be around to watch them mature into exceptional young men. It's the ticket that allows me to be a contributing member of society. I credit my success to the endless support I have received from so many sources. I want to give back so my fellow Americans have the opportunities to achieve their dreams.

What a tragedy it would be to deport this young woman. Why would America do that? What sin has she committed? What crime is she guilty of? Who will feel so good to see her leave America? It will certainly not be the many people whom she currently works with and serves in her community.

That is what we face because of President Trump's decision to end DACA. That is what hundreds of thousands of young people face every single day, who are just like Karina, because of this President's personal, unilateral decision. President Trump created the DACA crisis we face today.

Instead of working toward a solution, a few hard-liners around him have sabotaged every effort to help the Dreamers. In fact, the President quickly adds: Don't use the word "Dreamer." He doesn't like that word. It is why I have used it so often today. I introduced that DREAM Act 17 years ago, and I am glad it has become common parlance in America when referring to the plight of these young people.

Congress needs to do its job; most importantly, the President needs to do his. If he truly wants to lead this Nation and bring us together, if he wants to stand for fairness and justice and the opportunity for young people to make America better, then this President has to step up and admit that the problem he created on September 5 of last year can only be solved if he stands up and shows the courage and determination to find a solution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, earlier today, we heard the French President address a joint meeting of Congress. He reminded us that the French and American people have always fought side by side to defend our common values. France was our original ally during the American Revolution.

Americans fought and died in France during World War I and World War II.

Our alliance has spanned centuries because of diplomats who have cultivated the close relationship that the countries continue with today, and it is a shame we didn't have a Secretary of State of the United States who could have helped us welcome the French President during his visit here. We have a nominee who is eminently qualified—Mike Pompeo—and Republicans are ready to confirm him right now. We were ready to confirm him last week. We are ready for him to get to work in maintaining and strengthening relationships around the world.

Under previous administrations, we could have brought the nomination to the floor of the Senate without needing to waste all of the time and the delays, by the Democrats, on a cloture vote. That is how we used to treat important national security positions like the Secretary of State but no more, apparently. That is what happened even when Senators disagreed with the administration's foreign policies.

Consider Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State John Kerry. The Republicans and Democrats agreed that the President deserved to have the team he wanted—the people he wanted—on the ground helping him. We all agreed some of these positions were very important to national security—so important that, in a bipartisan way, we felt that playing political games with them was just wrong. Apparently, that has changed in the eyes of the Democrats now that Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States.

When Barack Obama became President in 2009, the Republicans didn't obstruct his nomination of Hillary Clinton to be Secretary of State. No. She was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 2. Then, when President Obama nominated John Kerry for the job in 2013, the Republicans didn't slow down or block that choice either. He was confirmed by a vote of 94 to 3. The Republicans had serious concerns about President Obama's foreign policy ideas, his strategies, his approach, but we confirmed the people whom he wanted as his Secretary of State. We did not obstruct these nominations, and we didn't try to tarnish the reputations of the people whom he picked for these important jobs, not at all.

I think the Senate does have an obligation to carefully evaluate a President's nominees. When those nominees are qualified and capable, then the President has every right to have his team and have his team in place quickly. That was the standard the Republicans applied to these Democratic nominees for Secretary of State under a Democratic President.

What has happened since then? Why has all of this changed since then?

We now have a Republican President, and we have a Republican nominee to be Secretary of State. It seems the Senate Democrats have tossed out the way things have always been done before. "No, we do not want to do it that

way anymore." The only interest seems to be obstruction—obstructing, delaying, resisting anything the Republicans, under President Trump, are trying to do, anything he is trying to do in terms of getting his team in place—a team he needs.

How does someone justify a vote for these two people to be Secretary of State—the Democrats and Republicans who voted for these two—and then turn around and not vote for Mike Pompeo? How can you justify that? I certainly cannot.

When Mike Pompeo was nominated to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, 15 Senators from the other side of the aisle were willing to set aside partisanship. They knew he was qualified for the job—first in his class at West Point, the Harvard Law Review, his activities as a Member of Congress. Everything he has done as the CIA Director has shown that those 15 Senators made the right call to support him over a year ago. They made the right call to join the Republicans and to respect the traditions of the Senate—to put qualified people on the job even if they may not have agreed completely with their philosophies on political issues.

There is no reason other than pure partisan politics that any of these Democrats would vote against Mike Pompeo now. He is eminently qualified. He showed during his confirmation hearing—he went through 5 hours of questioning—that he has the intelligence, he has the integrity, and he has the experience to serve as our Nation's Secretary of State.

Turn to the newspapers. You have the Washington Post coming out, writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo." You have USA TODAY coming out today and writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo." We even have the New York Daily News—the hometown newspaper of the leader of the Democratic Senate—coming out and writing: "Confirm Mike Pompeo."

The Democrats in the Senate don't seem to care. It doesn't seem like they are interested in doing the right thing. They are interested in obstructing and continuing the history of the deliberate delays we have seen with them through this administration. They have been doing it since the very first day of the Trump administration. At this rate, it would take more than 9 years to confirm all of President Trump's nominees for important jobs. Why? The Democrats can't offer a single good reason. The Senate has been forced to waste huge amounts of time in confirming nominees who aren't even controversial at all.

When Senate Democrats try to block the President from filling important national security jobs, they are putting America's security in danger. We all know the world is a dangerous place and is getting more dangerous every day. Our adversaries are opportunistic. Our adversaries are aggressive. Our allies are eager to work with the United

States. That is what the President of France told us today.

Have the Democrats already forgotten the atrocities we saw in Syria a few weeks ago? It was France and Great Britain that joined the President of the United States in launching airstrikes against Bashar Al-Assad's chemical weapons facilities.

We need to be able to maintain the relationships that allow this kind of action to occur. We need people on the job who can both encourage our allies and deter our enemies. The Senate Democrats have to decide what is more important to them—protecting America's national security or appeasing the extreme liberal, far leftwing of their party.

I understand if there are Senators who have principled reasons for objecting to this nominee or any nominee. They can vote no but not continue to hold up or slow down the process as they have done for a year and a half. I think, if a Senator is against a nominee, then come to the floor; state the objection; cite the evidence; vote no. Yet that is not what many Democrats here are doing with their obstruction of one nominee after another, and it is not what they have done with their obstructions of hundreds of nominees. For them, it doesn't seem, at least to me, to be a principled stand. It seems to be a reckless political stunt.

I listened to my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee the other evening when we voted on this nomination. I listened to the Democrats speak on the floor and speak to the press. Frankly, I have not heard a single good reason to delay the Senate's consideration of Mike Pompeo to be Secretary of State. The Democrats need to stop the games, stop the delays, allow us to move immediately to vote on his nomination, and get President Trump's Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, on the job.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 317

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, Senator McCASKILL and I rise to have an opportunity to pass a bill and for the Senate to do some work on a bill that has been around for several years and just hasn't been able to go over the finish line. We would like to see that finish today.

It is a bipartisan bill with a very straightforward concept. Right now, if any agency head or any sub-Cabinet individual or any individual within the government wants to see what another agency is doing, they have to go to the Office of Management and Budget. They would do a study—and get it back to them—to find out if the program they are doing exists somewhere else.

If any Member of this body or of the House wants to find out about an agency and such straightforward things as how many employees they have, what programs they are doing, if they meas-

ure those programs, how are those programs measured—if we want to find out those very basic things, we have to go to the GAO office to make a request, and 18 months later, we will get an answer back on that specific thing.

This is something that every agency either already has or should have but that the American people can't see, the Congress can't see, and, quite frankly, the individuals within the agencies also cannot see.

This is a straightforward concept. We call it the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act, and it is something Senator McCASKILL and I have worked very hard on. It is something that passed out of the Homeland Security Committee unanimously. This is a bipartisan bill. In fact, to show you how bipartisan it is, this passed in the House of Representatives last session 413 to 0. Not a single House Member voted against this proposal, but it wasn't able to pass in the Senate. So Senator McCASKILL and I brought it up again this year. It came unanimously out of committee; it also has been through the House of Representatives. In January of 2017, it passed unanimously in the House of Representatives again. This is not a controversial piece of legislation.

What is interesting is that Senator McCASKILL and I did a lot of work with President Obama's Office of Management and Budget to make sure there were no concerns. They had some concerns, so we made some changes, and President Obama's Office of Management and Budget signed off on this and said it would be a helpful document.

We have now worked with President Trump's Office of Management and Budget, which also signed off on this proposal and said that this would work.

We went to the Government Accountability Office, the entity we asked to help us find duplication, waste, and inefficiency in government, and in a hearing we asked Gene Dodaro, the head of GAO, a simple question: Would it be a help to have the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act? You have the ability to see all agencies. Would this be a help to you? His exact response:

I would urge the Congress to complete passage of that bill—

meaning the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act—

and send it to the president for signature. I think that it would make a huge difference in identifying overlap, duplication, fragmentation in the federal government and provide a better accountability tool to the Congress and the agencies. It's severely lacking.

That is from the head of the Government Accountability Office, the one we have asked to help us find these things. He is saying that he needs this tool. We need this tool. The agencies need this tool.

President Obama's team signed off on this. President Trump's team has signed off on this. It has passed unanimously out of the House of Representatives.

We bring it to the floor today to ask unanimous consent to move this across the floor of the Senate today, to be able to get in place what President Obama asked for, what President Trump has asked for, what the Government Accountability Office has asked for, what all Members of the House of Representatives have asked for, and what Senator McCASKILL and I are asking for.

With that, I yield to Senator McCASKILL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, I come today to join my colleague from Oklahoma to ask unanimous consent that we take up and pass S. 317, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD for his continued hard work on this bill. Senator LANKFORD has been working on this bill since his days in the House, and I worked hard to move this bill with his predecessor, Senator Tom Coburn, to try to get this through the Senate before he left the Senate. Hopefully, we can get it across the finish line, if not today, in the near future.

American taxpayers deserve a government that can tell them how their money is being spent. This is all this bill is trying to do. It is not complicated. It is trying to get important information to the people who are paying the bills. Don't they have a right to know where all the money is going?

It improves a publicly accessible online database with information about Federal programs, including the funding information for the program and the activities it comprises; the authorizing statutes and relevant rules and regs; the individuals a program serves; the employees who work to administer it; and copies of recent evaluations or assessments provided by the agency, inspectors general, or the Government Accountability Office.

The truth is, much of this information, including the program inventory itself, is already required by the Government Performance and Results Act, or GPRA. It passed this body by unanimous consent in 2010. But the current program inventory under GPRA is a mess. It is virtually useless to help lawmakers understand whether these programs are actually working as intended or whether they are a payroll without a purpose.

This bill adds a few additional information requirements to the program inventory and makes it much easier to compare apples to apples, which is what we need to do when we are making funding decisions.

Senator LANKFORD and I have agreed to a number of changes to this bill, raised not only by President Obama's administration but also President Trump's administration and by leaders in this body. There were some concerns expressed to us that OMB could use the information to punish agencies by holding up rules and holding up budget requests. I have news for everybody.

They can already do that; they have the ability. But just because they can do it now, we have agreed to include a clause which says that nothing in this bill gives OMB any additional authority whatsoever, other than what is needed to comply with the requirements of this bill. I can't imagine anything clearer than that.

We have added caveats to make it easier for programs and agencies to comply with the requirements of this bill.

I have to tell you, this is what drives the American people crazy. Different from private business, somebody around here could have a good idea and we can legislate a new program, but going back and determining whether that program is actually delivering on the goals that were stated and believed in at the time the legislation was passed—we are really not very good at that. That is what this bill is about.

It will give us the tools to require that these programs and agencies at least have information as to whether they are working—how much money they are spending, what they are trying to do. Why are we hiding behind a maddening bureaucracy when we can simplify things with the technology that is available today? Frankly, if we can't defend these programs and justify how we are spending taxpayer money, we should be shutting them down.

I urge my colleagues to commit to and support this good government transparency bill. I am worried that there is an objection. I am disappointed there will be an objection from the leader of my own party. That is disappointing to me, but it doesn't change my commitment that this is the right thing to do.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 43, S. 317; that the committee-reported amendment be withdrawn; that the Lankford substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I certainly have a great deal of respect for my friends from Missouri and Oklahoma and their desire to increase transparency in government. I share that goal. But, respectfully, the legislation they are proposing, I believe, would undermine and potentially threaten important programs administered by the Federal Government.

The idea of requiring the government to publish an inventory of Federal programs is not something I object to. As my friend from Missouri has stated, it is already required under the law, but it is such a cumbersome thing to do that for 7 years they have not published an inventory, not because it is

lacking the provisions in the bill proposed by my colleagues but because it is virtually impossible to do in the way that you would do it in other far more different and simple things—in a factory that makes widgets.

This bill would go further and make it even more difficult to publish the inventory they already haven't been able to publish. Neither the Director of OMB under President Obama nor the Director under President Trump has complied with the existing law.

I further have serious objections with the reporting requirements. How can an agency, for instance—and this would happen on a thousand occasions under this law—quantify the number of individuals who benefit from the Community Development Block Grant Program? If one neighborhood is revitalized, maybe it benefits the neighboring neighborhoods. What if they put that number in, and the OMB Director says: Oh, no. That is all wrong. There is no way to do that.

How about this: Is there a threshold to the number of people that is too many to administer a program that helps disabled Americans get appropriate schooling or access to healthcare? These types of questions could fill volumes and volumes. There is no good answer to them, there is no clear answer to them, and this law will not make it any easier to discern which programs are working and which programs are not.

I have a great deal of worry, particularly, to be honest, with Director Mulvaney. If you saw the budgets that Director Mulvaney has submitted to this Congress—he has eliminated just about every potential program. He is a scourge. He was one of the 10 most conservative Members of the House when he was there. He eliminated programs necessary in my State to keep the Department of Defense going, to help our nuclear weapons stay strong. He zeroed them out; he didn't just cut them. Can you imagine if he got his hands on this? He would use this bill not for the purposes my colleagues intend but to basically hold back money, punish, and in other ways delay very necessary programs that 90 to 95 percent of this Congress agrees to. I am concerned that this legislation, left to the implementation and oversight of a man so hostile to government services up and down the line, whose budgets have been dramatically and repeatedly rejected by Democrats and Republicans alike in the House and the Senate, would be used for ill, not good. The potential downside to this legislation far exceeds the potential upside, dramatically.

I cannot in good conscience support a bill that would give Mr. Mulvaney more tools to slash Federal programs that almost every American would agree serve the public good.

In conclusion, I support the goal of this bill, which is to provide more transparency to taxpayers, but I believe it will not. It will confuse things, delay things, provide more layers of

bureaucracy, not less, and can well be used by someone who believes in slashing programs of all kinds to delay them, fail to implement them, and not deliver the services that so many Americans need. I strongly object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, Senator SCHUMER is just flat wrong. He is just wrong about this bill. There is nothing in this bill that gives the OMB Director any additional power. There is nothing in this bill that gives him any additional tools to delay or cut programs. In fact, we specifically put that language in at the request of the minority floor leader, that this would give the OMB Director no additional tools.

Frankly, I remember when we were having the discussions under the Obama administration. Many of my Republican colleagues were worried that this would be a way for the Obama administration to somehow have more power than we want them to have.

The bottom line is, we have the power in the legislative body to decide which programs get funded. We are the people who appropriate government funds. Shouldn't the taxpayers and Members of Congress have an easily accessible way to get good information about a program?

By the way, no one is saying that anybody has to draw certain conclusions from the facts that would be on this website. We are only asking that the facts be put on the website. It is not nefarious. There is no plot here. I don't want to hurt CDBG, and neither do all of the House Members who voted for this. Not one Democratic House Member objected to this bill.

So I have to respectfully say that Senator SCHUMER is wrong about this legislation. He is wrong about what it would do. It is the right thing for good government. It is the right thing for transparency. I am going to keep working at it until hopefully we can either convince every Member to let this go by unanimous consent or until we get an opportunity to get a vote on it on the floor, where I am confident it would win by an overwhelming number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I could not more wholeheartedly agree with my colleague from Missouri.

What is surprising to me is that Senator SCHUMER's objection to the taxpayers right-to-know bill was that the taxpayers would actually find out information that he doesn't want them to find out. That is the surprising part.

I am grateful to be able to get his answer because over the last 6 months, our staff—Senator McCASKILL's and my staff—has worked with his staff every month. We have made 27 changes and 6 revisions over the last 6 months. In the last month, we have gotten radio silence—nothing from Senator SCHUMER's staff. So we finally brought it to

the floor and said “What is the problem?” because we can’t seem to figure out what the problem is. We learn today that the problem is that he doesn’t want the program inventory to be public because if the American people and the Congress and the Office of Management and Budget see the programs, they might actually do things with efficiency. That seems surprising to me, but if you read the transcript, that is what he just said. The fear is that they will actually find out what the Federal Government does in the programs.

Surely that is not his objection. Surely no one in this body would say: I hope the American people and the Office of Management and Budget never find out what the Federal Government does.

Here is what this bill does. The reason we could not have a good listing—Senator SCHUMER mentioned that there is no way to do a list right now—is because there is no definition for a program. The Federal Government has struggled with that simple definition, so this bill fixes that. The reason that inventory doesn’t exist gets solved with this. So literally Senator SCHUMER’s objection as to why we shouldn’t do this is nonsensical.

The second issue with this is the fear of OMB and Mick Mulvaney actually trying to slash programs. OMB and Mick Mulvaney have no authority to take down a program. Congress does that, and Senator SCHUMER knows that better than anyone in this body. While OMB can make recommendations, Congress has to actually vote to act on those recommendations. He can’t just slash programs. He can recommend it. He can say: Here is an issue of inefficiency. It is the exact same as the Obama administration could have done, the exact same as any future administration could do, but Congress must act on that.

It seems exceptionally shortsighted to say: I don’t want the American people to know what the government is doing, because of the current administration and someone I don’t like.

In a few years, there will be a different administration. That may be in 7 years, or that may be in 4 years, but in a few years, there will be a different administration, but this problem will still remain. Agencies can’t see what other agencies are doing, this Congress can’t see what the agencies are doing, and the American people cannot see what the agencies are doing.

I would say that for the benefit of the taxpayers—not the benefit of Washington bureaucracies but for the benefit of the taxpayers—we should allow this information to go public. I hope we can continue to work with Senator SCHUMER’s office, after making 27 changes that his staff recommended, to finish this document.

Yesterday, Senator SCHUMER was caught in the hallway and was asked what the problem is in the Senate, and his response to a reporter was that the

Senate needs more comity. I would agree.

The House approved this unanimously. Our committee approved this unanimously. It has come to the floor and has but one person who believes that the American people should not have access to the information on the programs they pay for.

I would love to see more comity in this body and for us to work this out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, an opioid epidemic is sweeping the country. More than 60,000 Americans are dying from opioid overdoses every year—more than the number of Americans who died in all 20 years of the Vietnam war. What a staggering fact that is, but behind each number is a tragedy for a family who loses their loved one.

Today, I want to tell the story of the Hacala family from Rogers, AR. It is a story of love, persistence, courage, and, I hope, a story that will save other families from the tragedy they felt.

Betty and Steve Hacala are joining us in the Gallery today. I met Betty and Steve 3 weeks ago at a roundtable on the opioid epidemic in Little Rock with Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, State and local law enforcement, and the families of opioid victims. The news is full of tragic deaths from heroin, fentanyl, and prescription drugs. I met families that day whose children died from those well-known drugs, but I learned from the Hacalas about another killer: unwashed poppy seeds.

Their son, Stephen Junior, died in his sleep from an overdose 2 years ago. Stephen was only 24 years old and was a recent graduate of the University of Arkansas. He loved to play guitar, and he was very accomplished at it. He was the joy of his parents’ life, and he was the joy of his sisters Christina and Lauren’s lives. His sudden death came as a shock to them, but they got another shock when an autopsy determined that Stephen died of morphine intoxication. There were no drugs in his apartment—no pill bottles, no needles, nothing. What had been found was a 5-pound bag of unwashed poppy seeds. Stephen had ordered the seeds on Amazon. The Arkansas crime lab soon determined that the poppy seeds were the source of the morphine that killed Stephen.

Stephen’s death resulted in part because of a dangerous gap in our Nation’s drug laws. It has been well known for ages that poppies are dangerous, both addictive and toxic. That is why it is illegal to grow or own almost any part of the poppy—the straw, the pod, the latex. There is an exception, of course, for poppy seeds, which many people enjoy on bagels, muffins, cakes, and other pastries. The seed itself isn’t addictive, but unwashed seeds tend to still have bits of the plant on them, which can be washed off and used to create a powerful narcotic.

To give a sense of just how deadly poppy seed tea can be, a lethal dose of morphine is about 200 milligrams, but researchers at Sam Houston State University, commissioned by the Hacalas, concluded that there were about 6,000 milligrams of morphine in that 5-pound bag of seeds that Stephen bought. That is over 30 times the lethal dose. Stephen had no way of knowing just how toxic these seeds were.

While there are plenty of legitimate uses for washed poppy seeds, there are no legitimate uses for unwashed seeds. Yet drug dealers and unscrupulous merchants are abusing the legal status of washed seeds to profit and to push unwashed seeds, which are widely available through online retailers. And when you read the user comments, you can easily find instructions for how to brew poppy seed tea and a description of its narcotic effects.

So there is no question of these unwashed seeds being used for grandma’s poppy seed cake; it is plain they are being used to smuggle the banned drug into our homes, and the manufacturers and distributors should know that. And Betty and Steve made sure they did. It is hard to imagine the grief they feel. It would have been easy to despair, but they did not. They want to save other families from their fate, to be sure Stephen’s death would have meaning. They researched the issue, commissioning that report from Sam Houston State and studying the market for unwashed poppy seeds. They also became advocates, meeting with community leaders and elected officials. As I said, I only learned about the danger of unwashed poppy seeds by meeting the Hacalas.

After that meeting, I put in a call to the leadership of Walmart and Amazon, which at the time both allowed unwashed poppy seeds to be sold on their websites. They listened to our case and quickly agreed to stop selling poppy seeds that are labeled as unwashed. This is important. The two behemoths of online commerce agreeing to take down those seeds was a victory and a testament to what normal citizens like Steve and Betty can accomplish.

This is more than a labeling problem. In fact, some of the most potent and deadly seeds, which we know about thanks to the work of Steve and Betty, are not labeled as unwashed and are still available for purchase. Therefore, I will work in the Senate and with the Drug Enforcement Agency to ban unwashed seeds entirely. But today I do want to take a moment to thank Amazon and Walmart for taking an important first step for our country, for our State, and for the Hacalas and families like theirs.

It is always hard to lose a loved one, and a child is the hardest loss of all. I suspect nothing can assuage that kind of grief. But because of the Hacalas’ courage and determination, we can hope that a few more families will be spared it. That is an act of true love for Stephen and for their fellow Americans.

Mr. President, the office of Secretary of State has always held a place of special prominence in the President's Cabinet. The conduct of foreign policy is the highest craft of statesmanship. In the Secretary's hands rest matters of the most sensitive, delicate, and consequential nature, affairs of war and—we always hope—peace. President Kennedy put it simply when he said: "Domestic policy can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us." That is why Presidents across the ages have filled the office of Secretary of State with some of the most distinguished statesmen in our history, names such as Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Clay, Webster, Marshall, Kissinger.

Now we will add the name of Mike Pompeo. Very soon, the Senate will confirm Mike to be our 70th Secretary of State. I strongly support his nomination, as I have made widely known in recent days. Before we vote, I want to emphasize what a truly impressive nominee he is—a man of noble character whose name future generations, I suspect, will include on the roster of those great statesmen.

Mike has succeeded at every stage of life. He graduated first in his class at West Point and then joined the 2nd Cavalry on the frontline of freedom in West Germany. After his military service, he excelled at Harvard Law School. He later started one business and served as president of another. He became a respected community leader in his adopted home of Wichita, where his fellow Kansans elected him in repeated landslides to serve them in the House of Representatives. Wichita is also where he had his biggest victory of all—winning the hand of his bride, Susan. Of course, he has served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for the past 15 months after being confirmed by the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 66 to 32. Since then, I have watched Mike lead the CIA, boost its morale, and put the right people in the right places, driving them to succeed and holding them accountable.

None of this surprises me because I have known Mike for as long as I have been in public life. When I was an unknown candidate for the House, he called me out of the blue to encourage me and offer support. He was one of my best friends in the House and one of my strongest supporters and smartest advisers in my Senate campaign. As Members of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, we traveled the world together to learn, to conduct oversight, and to engage with foreign leaders.

Mike and I have collaborated on several occasions to highlight gathering threats to our Nation. In 2013 we wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post calling on our party to support a strike against Bashar al-Assad for using chemical weapons. It was a lonely place for Republicans to be, but we were right then, and we are right now. I only wish more Republicans and President Obama had heeded our call.

In 2015 we traveled to Vienna, where we discovered and revealed Iran's secret side deals with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In 2016, after a trip to Norway and Sweden, we wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal drawing attention to Europe's growing challenges with mass migration and what it means for our own country.

Mike has gone from one success to another because he is a consummate professional—a man who treats everyone with respect but who doesn't pull a punch or shade a view to please his audience.

Democrats don't deny his professionalism. The senior Senator from Montana has said that he has led an "exemplary career in public service." The junior Senator from Delaware said he would be a "good advocate for the career professionals at the State Department and USAID." Even former Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright have expressed their hope that he would reinvigorate the State Department, and nonpartisan experts agree that Mike Pompeo's integrity and record of accomplishments cannot be denied. As ADM James Stavridis has said, Mike is "a solid, thoughtful and accomplished leader." It is why 30 national security professionals—including former NSA Director Keith Alexander, former CIA Director Michael Hayden, and former Attorney General Mike Mukasey—submitted a letter endorsing Mike's nomination.

Unfortunately, many Democratic Senators are opposing Mike's nomination, and they have given their reasons. But I have to say that these reasons don't hold up very well under scrutiny. Some say Mike is adverse to diplomacy. In fact, he simply knows that diplomacy is most effective when it is backed with a credible military threat. As Frederick the Great said, "Diplomacy without arms is like music without instruments."

He also knows that some situations may not be susceptible to diplomatic solutions no matter how much one might wish it so. That is a fact of life. It is not a reason to oppose Mike's nomination.

I would add that he recently demonstrated his commitment to diplomacy by meeting with Kim Jong Un to lay the groundwork for the President's upcoming summit. It is hard to think of a worse regime than North Korea, but Mike was willing to sit down with Kim to try to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. That should show us all, definitively, that he is committed to diplomacy.

Others say they are opposing Mike because they disagree with him on social issues. Here I would simply note that most Republicans surely disagree with Hillary Clinton's and John Kerry's views on these issues. Yet they still voted to confirm them. For that matter, Hillary Clinton opposed same-sex marriage when the Democrats voted to confirm her back in 2009. So it

hardly seems fair to hold Mike Pompeo to a different standard.

Still, others oppose Mike's nomination because he refused to say that he would resign if President Trump fired Special Counsel Robert Mueller. I have to say, that is quite a stretch for a Secretary of State nomination. This isn't the Department of Justice. On the merits, I would ask: Do they think it would have been a good idea for Henry Kissinger and Jim Schlesinger to resign in 1973 or 1974? Would it help or hurt America to have our top diplomat suddenly leave the world stage at a time of domestic turmoil? And if that is to be the standard, have those Democrats asked Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis that question? I bet they haven't.

Finally, there are those who worry that he will not be a check on the President. But since when is a Cabinet member supposed to do that? Regular elections, the separation of powers, and all that entails are the checks on the executive branch under our Constitution. The President's Cabinet owes him candid advice, especially when he doesn't want to hear it, but they aren't supposed to undermine him. The State Department, in particular, is the last place for open conflict between the President and a Cabinet member. If the world doesn't believe that the Secretary has the President's confidence and conducts foreign policy on his behalf, he is of little use to the President or the country.

In fact, I would say it is the President's confidence in Mike that cinches his readiness for the job. When Mike Pompeo speaks, the world will know that the Secretary of State speaks for the President. He is well respected by the President's national security team, and he is well respected by the world.

I know Mike Pompeo will excel as our Secretary of State, and I regret some Senators will oppose him for shortsighted, political reasons, but since they all profess grave concerns about the lack of personnel at the State Department, I look forward to them all confirming Secretary Pompeo's sub-Cabinet nominees promptly once he submits them.

But even better is to put politics aside and to do the right thing for our country. Mike Pompeo has served his country with distinction. He is eminently qualified to be Secretary of State, and we need him on the job now. I call on every Senator to vote for confirmation and to send to the State Department a strong leader, a wise counselor, and a good man—Mike Pompeo.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to voice my strong

opposition to Director Pompeo's nomination to be our next Secretary of State.

This position is too important. The stakes are too high to let this nominee slide by without full consideration of what it would mean for Director Pompeo to be our Nation's top diplomat—the person whose every word and action broadcasts America's values to the rest of the world.

Some of my opposition concerns Director Pompeo's harsh views on matters of war and peace, and his blatantly false accusations regarding members of the Muslim community. Some of my opposition surrounds my deep concern about Director Pompeo's ability to stand strong against President Trump's erratic and uninformed foreign policy positions.

But what I wanted to take a few minutes this afternoon to do is to express my serious concern about what Director Pompeo's ideological, extreme positions on women's rights and reproductive freedom would mean for women across the world.

Our Nation has an important role to uphold as a global champion of women's rights. We need a Secretary of State who will be a strong advocate and continue our legacy of leadership in fighting for women's health and reproductive freedom and the rights of women and girls around the world. Instead, I am afraid Director Pompeo would undo much of that legacy and undermine much of the global progress we have made.

An advocate for women doesn't repeatedly support the global gag rule, which keeps funding from clinics and programs that provide women important medical care. Director Pompeo did.

An advocate for women doesn't vote to defund the United Nations Population Fund, which provides family planning services for women around the world who live in poverty. Director Pompeo did.

When it comes to fighting for the survivors of rape and against those who would use rape as a tool of war, it is clear we should stand by survivors, fight for them, and work to make sure they have access to the medical care they need. However, Director Pompeo has said he would prevent women who have been raped from access to abortions. That is an unacceptably cruel response to women and war survivors, and it is one of the many clear indicators that Director Pompeo is an unacceptable choice to serve as Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State is always a critically important position, but it takes on even more important meaning in 2018. The President not only needs good counsel in navigating our complex global relationships, but he also desperately needs someone who can tell him when he is wrong and who can stand up to him and be a check on this President's worse impulses.

Throughout his nomination process, Director Pompeo failed to convince me

that he is that person. So I will be voting no on his nomination to be Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I don't know if the Presiding Officer was able to be present in the House of Representatives earlier today when the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, spoke to us about a variety of things, including the Paris accords, the Iran deal, the long history we have between their country and our country; the fact that the American Revolution and the French Revolution were really contemporaneous. We share the birth of democracy in our country and, to an extent, in their country at roughly the same time.

Those who have studied American history know that one of the ways we won our freedom and independence from the tyranny of that British throne was with the support of the French. We have not always agreed with one another in the years since then, but mostly we have. The bond between their Nation and our Nation continues to be strong, not just between our leaders but also between our people.

We are fortunate to have a number of French tourists who come to our country. From time to time, some of us are fortunate to go to that part of the world and to visit them, to know them as human beings. The bond between our countries is a benefit for both them and for us, and, I think, for the world.

I have never come to the floor to start reading someone else's speech, but I am really tempted to read some parts of what President Emmanuel Macron said today. I speak a little bit of French. I spoke to him briefly in French before he gave his remarks. His English is a lot better than my French. I want to mention a couple of things that he said and add some comments of my own.

He talked a bit about the Paris Agreement, and he talked about climate change. These were his words, and I think they are worth repeating and reflecting on.

He said:

I believe in building a better future for our children which requires offering them a planet that is still habitable in 25 years. Some people think that securing current industries and their jobs is more urgent than transforming our economies to meet the global challenge of climate change.

He went on to say:

I hear these concerns, but we must find a smooth transition to a low-carbon economy.

Because what is the meaning of our life, really, if we work and live destroying our planet while sacrificing the future of our children?

President Macron then said:

What is the meaning of our life if our conscious decision is to reduce the opportunities for our children or for our grandchildren? By polluting the oceans, not mitigating carbon dioxide emissions, and destroying our biodiversity, we're killing our planet.

He went on to say:

Let us face it. There is no planet B.

I turned to my colleague sitting next to me and I said, I am going to steal that line: There is no planet B.

He is right.

I like to say this is the only planet we have, and it is going to be the only one we ever have in our lifetime, and probably the lifetime of anybody around this planet.

Then President Macron went on to say:

On this issue, it may happen that we have disagreements between the United States and France. It may happen. Like in all families. But that's, for me, a short-term disagreement. In the long run, we will have to face the same realities, and we're citizens of this same planet, so we will have to face it. We have to work together with business leaders and local communities. Let us work together in order to make our planet great again—

Isn't that terrific? "Let's work together to make our planet great again"—not just to make America great again; not just to make France great again but to make our planet great again—

and create new jobs and new opportunities. While safeguarding our earth.

He concluded this part of his speech by saying:

And I'm sure, one day, the United States will come back and join the Paris Agreement. And I'm sure we can work together to fulfill, with you, the ambitions of the global compact on the environment.

I had the opportunity last week to speak at the University of Delaware to a couple hundred graduate students. It is an annual gathering that they have and they were nice enough to invite me to come and talk to them about leadership. One of the things I mentioned is that leaders are aspirational. We appeal to people's better angels. Leaders unite, not divide. Leaders build bridges, not walls.

I thought we were privileged today to hear that kind of leader. When I spoke to him in French, I wished him well. I wished him good luck, and I thanked him for joining us in the kind of message he brought to us.

I don't suspect he would have any reason to know this, but when people got up today and went to work in this country, 3 million people went to work in jobs that probably didn't exist 20, 30 years ago—3 million people. The jobs they went to work on are jobs where they are creating renewable energy, sustainable energy, clean energy, carbon-free energy, or they are going to work in jobs which conserve energy so we just use a whole lot less altogether. Think about that. Three million people

in this country went to work in those kinds of jobs. We are adding 75,000, 100,000 of those jobs every year.

I have always had a close relationship with the auto industry until about 6 or 7 years ago. We had a GM plant and a Chrysler plant in Delaware, with about 4,000 employees in each of them at one time. We lost them both at the bottom of the great recession. I have always, and even now, tried to work closely with the auto industry, even though they don't have the kind of presence today in Delaware they once did, but they have provided a lot of jobs. Part of the supply chain is in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and other places.

Sometimes people say we cannot have clean air, clean water, and a strong economy. I think that is a false choice. The President of France as much as said that today.

It was not a Frenchman, but it was Einstein who said that "in adversity lies opportunity." I think if we are smart about it and we look at climate change, global warming, sea level rise, and pollution of one kind or the other, there is actually great opportunity that each of those present to us. They present difficulties and challenges but also great opportunity.

I will never forget a couple of years ago what happened in a hearing in the Environment and Public Works Committee on the issue of mercury emissions from powerplants. We had, I think, four or five, maybe six witnesses. The first four or five witnesses said: We cannot reduce mercury emissions by 80 percent over the next decade. I think that is what they said. They said we cannot; it is just not possible for us to reduce mercury emissions.

Why do we want to reduce mercury? Because it is up in the air; it is carried by the winds, the rains; it ends up in the water; it ends up in fish; we eat fish. It is harmful especially for pregnant women. They give birth, in many cases, to children with brain damage. So we had this hearing, and the first four or five witnesses, all from coal-fired utilities, said: We can't do it. Eighty percent is not a reasonable target for mercury reduction.

The last witness was from a trade association whose members actually focus on developing technology to reduce harmful emissions of all kinds, including mercury emissions from powerplants. Our last witness said: I think we can not only meet that target of 80 percent reduction in 10 years, I think we can do better than that, and I think we can do it in less than 10 years. Do you know what? He was right. It turned out he was right. We ended up with a 90-percent reduction in mercury emissions, and that technology has been used in this country.

The nice thing about it is that technology—there are plenty of coal-fired plants around the world where they need to reduce mercury, and we are selling that technology all over the

world. So that is really one of the opportunities the President of France was talking about—looking at adversity and finding opportunities, including climate change and other kinds of pollution; pollution of our water, you name it.

Anyway, it was just a joy to hear him speak today. I was really impressed.

We have a bunch of pages sitting in here today. I don't know if they were able to hear the speech, but if you got to hear the speech today, raise your hands. I think it had to be uplifting for young people because he was focused very much on the future. He was not just looking back but focusing very much on young people. I liked that a lot.

One of the other things he spoke about was the Iran deal. For years and years, as some of my colleagues may recall, we suspected that Iran was secretly developing nuclear weapons. We didn't know for sure. We suspected the worst. In the last administration in this country, we went to work with a new leader in Iran to see if we might be able to better ensure that they are not going to develop nuclear weapons, and we provided safeguards and early detection systems so that if they do, we will know about it. In the meantime, we placed a lot of economic sanctions on Iran, trying to get them to give up what we thought was the development of nuclear weapons. They always said, "No, we are not doing that," but we didn't believe them.

At the end of the day, we looked at entering into this agreement between the United States and Iran and five other nations. Iran had to open themselves up to intrusive inspections. They had to be willing to give up some of the more modern centrifuges they had for developing highly enriched uranium. To the extent that they are willing to do that and continue to put up with intrusive inspections by the atomic energy agency, then we would gradually reduce and relax the economic sanctions.

The intrusive inspections have continued now for several years, and the agencies responsible for this say, so far, they are keeping their word. Does that mean they are always going to keep their word? Not necessarily. Does that mean we should be less resolute in watching what they are doing? No. We should be resolute and hold their feet to the fire. But to the extent that they are keeping their word, I think the idea of lifting our sanctions—along with other countries as part of these accords and joint agreement—is good, not only for Iran but also for us.

We have this agreement because we felt it was important for inspectors to have a window into that country to see what they are doing. We have that. So far, it seems to be working.

Our President now says that in a couple weeks he would like to close out of the Iran deal. If we do that, my fear is they will simply go back to a secret program to develop nuclear weapons.

That will encourage the Saudis to do the same and maybe lay a precursor or put us in motion to have a nuclear arms race in that part of the world. Sunni versus Shia, Saudis versus Iran—that is not a competition that will end well.

I am not going to read everything President Macron said today about the Iran deal, but a fair amount is worth repeating. I will do that, and then add some comments of my own:

As for Iran, our objective is clear: Iran should never possess any nuclear weapons. Not now, not in 5 years, not in 10 years. Never.

"Never" is a long time.

But this policy should never lead us to war in the Middle East. We must ensure stability, and respect sovereignty of the nations, including that one of Iran, which represents a great civilization.

Let us not replicate past mistakes in the region. Let us not be naive on one side. Let us not create new walls ourselves on the other side.

There is an existing framework—called the JCPOA—to control the nuclear activity of Iran. We signed it at the initiative of the United States. We signed it, both the United States and France. That is why we cannot say we should just get rid of it like that. But it is true to say that this agreement may not address all concerns, very important concerns. This is true. But we should not abandon it without having something substantial, more substantial, instead. That is my position. That is why France will not leave the JCPOA, because we signed it.

Your President and your country will have to take, in the current days and weeks, [its own] responsibilities regarding this issue.

What I want to do, and what we decided together with your President, is that we can work on a more comprehensive deal addressing all these concerns. That is why we have to work on this more comprehensive deal based—as discussed with President Trump yesterday—on four pillars.

And then President Macron went on to talk about those four pillars.

[No. 1] the substance of the existing agreement, especially if you decide to leave it, [No. 2] the post-2025 period, in order to be sure we will never have any nuclear activity for Iran, [No. 3] the containment of military influence of the Iranian regime in the region, and [No. 4] the monitoring of ballistic activity.

The Iranians have a penchant for firing and testing ballistic missiles. They say that it is not offensive; it is defensive. But one would wonder about that. Questioning minds way wonder.

I think these four pillars, the ones I addressed before the General Assembly of the United Nations last September, are the ones which cover the legitimate fears of the United States and our allies in the region.

I think we have to start working now on these four pillars to build this new, comprehensive [deal] and to be sure that, whatever the decision of the United States will be, we will not leave the floor to the absence of rules.

We will not leave the floor to these conflicts of power in the Middle East, we will not . . . [increase] tensions and potential war.

That is my position, and I think we can work together to build this comprehensive deal for the whole region, for our people, because I think it fairly addresses our concerns. That is my position.

I have heard several Presidents speak to joint sessions of Congress over the years; I have heard any number of leaders from other nations speak before joint meetings of Congress in the years I have been privileged to serve here. I don't know that I have seen a warmer and more enthusiastic welcome than the one we witnessed today for the President of our close ally, our friends, the French. I hope the standing ovations he repeatedly received reflect not just the emotion of the moment but reflect the belief that he may be on to something here.

One of my colleagues whom I was sitting next to during President Macron's remarks said that the President of France was delivering an elegant rebuke to our President, and he was so skillful in doing it, it was hard to tell that was what he was doing. Maybe that is true. But I think he might be on to something. He didn't just come up with it today. This is something that President Macron has been talking about for days, weeks, months—at least since last fall.

I hope our President, with whom he had a chance to spend some time, might say: Let's drill down on that. I think you might be on to something.

Meanwhile, I don't know what others have been saying about former Secretary of State Tillerson, but I thought he was an unlikely person to be Secretary of State. He had been the leader of Exxon, knew the world, and knew the world's leaders. It was unusual to have someone with that pedigree to be our Secretary of State. He exceeded expectations, at least for me. I think he was fired by the President a couple of months ago through Twitter, and that was it—no ceremony, no handshake, no thank-you for taking on a tough job and doing his best.

I would say to Rex Tillerson: Thank you for your willingness to give it a shot, for taking on a tough job in a tough administration. We may not agree with everything he said or thought, but he took on a tough job, and we are grateful for that.

The question is, Who is going to succeed him. I have asked to meet with the President's nominee. They have not been able to find time to do that, which I think is unfortunate.

If we had had the time to meet, I would have wanted to talk with him about a number of issues. One of those would be the Iran nuclear deal and how he feels about it. I would like to hear his thoughts on what President Macron suggested today as a possible alternative follow-on to the JCPOA. But I am not going to have the opportunity to do that.

I was reminded recently of something John Kennedy once said. I hope I have this right: America should never negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear negotiating. Think about that. Our country should never negotiate out of fear, but we shouldn't be afraid to negotiate.

I think President Macron may have given us an opening here, and the open-

ing is to come up with something that could be even more effective than the JCPOA. If we are smart, the door has been opened and we will walk through it instead of walking backward.

While we prepare to vote, maybe tomorrow, on the nominee to be our next Secretary of State, one of my disappointments is not having had a chance to—not negotiate with him but to share with him what President Macron had to say, to try to get his take on that and, if he were Secretary of State, how he might pursue this opening. Unfortunately, that is not going to happen.

I notice my neighbor from across the border in Pennsylvania has risen to address the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TAX REFORM

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to follow my friend and neighbor to the south and east from the great State of Delaware.

Yesterday, the Senate Finance Committee had a hearing on tax reform. I had a chance to introduce one of the witnesses, a fellow named David Cranston from Robinson Township in Western Pennsylvania.

David is the president of Cranston Material Handling Equipment Corp. It is a third-generation small business founded in 1957 by David's grandfather. Today, David leads that company—a company he has worked at since 1983. So for 35 years he has been there. Today he leads a team of seven full-time employees and two part-time employees, truly a small family-owned business.

Cranston Material sells and installs material handling and storage equipment to manufacturing companies, including very large manufacturing companies, and their products and services help these manufacturers to store and lift products in the storage process—items like cabinets, containers, conveyors, cranes, and dock equipment.

As I know the Presiding Officer understands very well, it is small businesses like this that really make up the backbone of our economy and the backbone of our communities.

What is it that David Cranston had to share with us as a witness before our committee? He shared the story of how our tax reform from late last year is already working and helping his small business.

How is that happening? Well, in a variety of ways. The two most direct ways are, No. 1, Cranston Material is organized as a subchapter S corporation. That is a long way of saying they are not taxed at the level of the corporation itself but, rather, the income that is earned by the business flows through to the owners of the business and is then taxed on the individual returns of the owners.

How has our tax reform helped the owners of this business? We built into

the Tax Code an automatic 20 percent discount on the amount of their income that is taxed. So 20 percent of their income from this business is not taxed at all. That is true for all small businesses in America. The 80 percent that is taxed is taxed at lower rates.

The total tax burden for these small businesses is much lower than it used to be. Why is that important? It is important for a lot of reasons. David Cranston told us that this is how they are able to accumulate capital. This is how his business is better able to accumulate the capital that he describes as the lifeblood of his small business. It is, in fact, capital that allows these small businesses like Cranston to take advantage of new growth opportunities. Specifically, he shared with us an example. The tax savings that he is already enjoying have helped him expand into a new product line this year—a product line that he did not carry before, couldn't afford to, but now he can. In order to launch this product line, he needed to purchase new equipment, invest in employee training, and build a new website—all of which are well understood.

He also touched on something else, another way in which our tax reform is helping his business; that is, the business optimism that he is seeing, which is encouraging his customers—primarily larger companies—to increase their own capital spending. That includes, in some cases, the purchasing of his products. As Mr. Cranston put it, the tax reform is “spurring business investment and therefore has set the stage for economic growth for years to come.”

This increased investment activity that is helping workers and businesses and small businesses and our economy is exactly what we envisioned, exactly what we had hoped for, and exactly what we designed our tax reform to accomplish.

I have to say, the story that David Cranston told us at the Senate Finance Committee yesterday is not an isolated story. It is completely consistent with stories I have heard all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from small businesses; that is, tax reform is working. It is working for them.

Businesses are, in fact, increasing their investments, exactly as we predicted they would if we lowered the after-tax cost of making those investments. For example, just last month, the March 2018 research report by Morgan Stanley—they surveyed their clients—concluded that its capital expenditure plans index—it is an index they keep track of that monitors the amount of capital being put to work in America, being spent on new equipment—according to them, in March, just last month, it reached an alltime high. Their characterization: “Strength in our index indicates continued momentum in equipment investment through the second quarter of 2018.” It is already happening, and they believe it is likely to continue.

Some of our friends on the other side who are very critical of our tax reform were very critical of the idea that business should benefit from this. They didn't want business to benefit from this at all. I have to point out the multiple ways they are wrong in their analysis.

First of all, when businesses—especially small businesses but all kinds of businesses—benefit from a lower tax regime, much of that benefit flows right to workers. We have seen that in a very direct fashion. In fact, over 500 known, large companies—big enough that their press releases get picked up and noticed—have given employees bonuses, pay raises, increased contributions to their pension plans, or some combination. There are now millions of American workers who work for these 500-plus companies who have directly benefited personally, in their pockets, because of the tax reform. I think this is fantastic, and it has been immediate. It is already happening.

Over the long term, I think there is an even bigger benefit that will be accruing to American workers as a result of our tax reform, and that is the medium-, long-term upward pressure on wages for the people who work for a living to earn those wages. Why do I say that? The fact is, the more capital that gets spent, the more productive workers are able to become, and the more they are able to earn.

Let me give an example that I like. If you go to any construction site when they are at the stage of doing the site development—when they are moving the dirt and maybe they are digging a hole for the foundation—at that stage of the process, you very typically will see somebody operating a backhoe. There is a guy operating a backhoe. He is digging the hole for the foundation. You will very often see somebody with a shovel. He is doing the tidy-up work around the edges. The guy with the shovel is working very hard. He is probably working up more of a sweat. He probably goes home with his muscles and his back aching more than the guy operating the backhoe. But who do you think gets paid more? It is not a close call; the guy operating the backhoe is always paid more. There is one reason for that. The reason is that he has a more advanced set of skills. Because he has those skills and because he has a major piece of equipment to operate, he is much more productive than any human being can ever be with a shovel. The more productive worker is able to earn more.

That is why I am so excited about a reform that encourages businesses to invest in capital. It is already making workers more productive, and that means they are going to earn more income. But it doesn't stop there. All of that capital expenditure, whether it is with David Cranston's company or whether it is a backhoe—when companies want to buy that, someone has to build it. There is more demand for workers to build more of this equip-

ment that is getting put to use. Then after it is built and it is purchased by the business that can afford it now because of tax reform, somebody has to operate it. There is still more demand for workers.

So what happens in an economy when you are close to full employment—the unemployment rate is around 4 percent, which is unusually low for the American economy—and you introduce a significant new demand for workers—well, I would say there are two things that happen. You create opportunities for people who left the workforce to return, and you put upward pressure on wages because all the businesses have to compete for whatever workers are available.

So we have the direct benefit that people have seen in the form of lower withholdings and more take-home pay. We have the direct benefit that workers have seen when the companies they work for have decided to give them a raise or a bonus because they can better afford it. And we have this indirect benefit that might very well be the biggest of them all, as workers become more productive because they get to use the equipment that is put to work when their companies invest the capital that we have made more available to them.

I am very bullish, as apparently the respondents to the Morgan Stanley survey were, and I am grateful to David Cranston for telling his story about how much his small business is already benefiting from our tax reform.

Mr. President, I would like to make a completely unrelated point, and that is, I would like to mention that I had an opportunity to have a long conversation today with CIA Director Mike Pompeo, to discuss his vision for his role as Secretary of State, should he be confirmed, and his vision for America's role in the world, the leadership role we have historically played and how he sees that going forward. I will tell you, I was extremely impressed. He is a very thoughtful, very knowledgeable, wise individual. I think he will give great counsel to our President. I think he will be an outstanding diplomat. I think the fact that he comes from the intelligence community will inform his judgment in a very constructive way. I think we are all very, very fortunate that Mike Pompeo is willing to serve in this capacity. I am looking forward to his confirmation later this week.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak on the pending nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the Secretary of State. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I opposed the nomination in committee, and I will oppose it on the floor.

I have said publicly that this was not an open-and-shut case for me. Frankly, I would submit that I have probably voted for more of the President's nomi-

nees who have come before the Senate than have many of my colleagues. I do believe in giving a substantial amount of deference to the President in the choices that he makes of those who are to serve him in his administration. There have been a number of applicants for Cabinet posts whom I have supported even though I have had grave misgivings about the policies that they were going to be articulating and that they were going to be carrying out.

I also believe Director Pompeo when he talks about the morale crisis at the Department of State and his sincere desire to try to remedy that and address it. There was a morale crisis at the Department of State after Secretary Tillerson waged an assault on diplomats in his trying to push out as many as he could for over a year, changing work requirements to make it harder for people to live in very difficult places around the world and continuing a hiring freeze well past the point at which it was justified. There are a lot of people who serve in this country here in Washington and abroad who need to be told that their work is valuable again, and I believe Mike Pompeo when he talks about the need to try to engage in that morale-building project.

I think there are check marks on the side of the ledger that would argue for Mike Pompeo's confirmation, but I am going to vote no because, unfortunately, I think there are far more check marks on the other side of the ledger.

I want to talk today about the issue of qualifications. I don't argue with the fact that our choices, as those in the Senate, when it comes to those who are picked for the Cabinet, shouldn't really be about policy differences. Sometimes the policy differences will be so serious that Members of the President's opposing party may have to cast a "no" vote. By and large, I do think that we should be evaluating candidates based on their qualifications and based on whether their views are at least between the 20-yard lines, within the mainstream conversation about the portfolio of issues that they are going to undertake to oversee.

So I want to talk today about my belief that Director Pompeo is not qualified to be our next Secretary of State. I think that is the appropriate conversation for us to be having, and I want to talk about it through the prism of three qualifications that I would argue any Secretary of State has to meet.

One is that a Secretary of State who is going to be advising the President on matters of war and peace and on questions of military operations overseas has to believe in his heart or in her heart in the Constitution—in the separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches—when it comes to war-making.

The second is that a Secretary of State has to believe in the value of diplomacy. The Secretary of State is in

the national security cabinet in order to represent diplomatic pathways out of very complicated, vexing, and dangerous problems around the globe. You need a Secretary of State who truly believes that diplomacy can be a viable path out of very complicated problems.

Third, you need a Secretary of State who is free of prejudice or who is free of a substantial association with prejudice. This is our Nation's chief diplomat, who is going to be representing the United States all over the world, who is going to try to build bridges between our country and those countries with different cultures, different faiths, different backgrounds, and different ways of viewing the world.

On these three tests, I don't believe that Director Pompeo measures up. Let me talk about each one of them very briefly.

The first is this belief in the separation of powers. If we aren't standing up for article I powers, no one else will. The Founding Fathers were very clear that when it came to military engagement outside of the United States, it was the Congress and only the Congress that had the ability to declare war. Now, admittedly, war is a much fuzzier concept today than it was when armies were marching against each other in open fields and when neat, tidy peace treaties were wrapping up those hostilities. So I will grant my colleagues that declarations of war are a little bit harder today when the enemies never seem to go away and the definition of "hostilities" is a little different than it used to be.

Yet, at the hearing, I asked a series of questions of Director Pompeo, whose answers did not leave me with any confidence that he understood that there still must be some places in which only the Congress can declare hostilities. Now, I don't believe the President has the ability to take military action against the Syrian regime without having the authorization of Congress. Apparently, there are members of the President's Cabinet who believe the same thing. Media reports suggest that Secretary Mattis counseled the President to go to Congress first before attacking the Syrian regime.

So I queried Director Pompeo about this topic. I asked him whether there was any attack that had been launched against the United States from the Syrian regime. His answer was no.

I asked him whether there was any threat of imminent attack from the Syrian regime against the United States. His answer was no.

I then asked him what the authorization was that allowed the President to take this action. His answer was "article II authority," which is kind of a blanket answer for anybody in an administration who doesn't have an answer.

I submit that the Obama administration occasionally relied on article II authority as well, but I tried to give Director Pompeo a way out of that overly broad answer.

I asked: Would you identify for me one limiting factor on this broad claim of article II authority. He could not. He could not articulate one definable, articulated restraint on article II military authority before the Foreign Relations Committee.

It speaks to what, I think, is a belief inside this administration, which is now being buoyed by people like Director Pompeo and John Bolton, that the President has virtually unlimited authority to begin military operations overseas. If you can attack the Syrian regime without having any authorization from Congress, then why couldn't the President launch a military attack against North Korea without going to Congress in the way that John Bolton had recommended in some of his writings before joining the administration?

If a Secretary of State is not prepared to argue that the Constitution requires that authority and cannot even articulate a single restraint on a seemingly limitless power under article II to launch attacks overseas without going to Congress, then who is making that argument?

I think a Secretary of State has to have an understanding of the limits of executive power overseas. I don't think Director Pompeo has that belief. Otherwise, he would have answered very differently the questions that he was given in his confirmation hearing.

Secondly, I believe that a baseline qualification to be the Secretary of State, to be the Nation's chief diplomat, is to believe in the fundamental power of diplomacy. Over and over, primarily when he was a Congressman, Director Pompeo showed us that he didn't think much of American diplomatic power. He opposed the JCPOA, which is, of course, a mainstream opinion within the Republican Party, but he did so because he thought that military action would involve just a few thousand sorties—American planes flying over Iran, bombing the country into submission. I think that is a pretty naive, uneducated view of how a war with Iran would go down, but it demonstrates an enthusiasm for military options ahead of diplomatic options, the kind that may be better suited for the Department of Defense than for the Department of State.

He has further cheered on this President as he has pulled out of the Paris climate accords, as he has attacked multilateral alliances that the United States has long been a part of. This is a candidate for Secretary of State who has a long history of critiquing and criticizing diplomatic paths to solving complicated problems around the world.

I want a cheerleader for diplomacy at the Department of State. We have been missing that for the last 1½ years with Secretary Tillerson. It doesn't seem we are going to remedy that. I think a qualification for Secretary of State is to be a cheerleader for diplomacy. That has not been the reputation or the record of Mike Pompeo.

Lastly, I think you need to be free of prejudice or free of substantial association with prejudice, and the reason for this qualification is self-evident. This is the member of the administration who is going to be most often overseas meeting with leaders that come from very different backgrounds, who believe different things than Americans do, who practice different religions than the majority of Americans do, who have different traditions than the majority of Americans do. So one has to have a respect, right? One has to have a love of other people who come from different faiths and different traditions if you are going to take this job.

This may be the blackest mark on Director Pompeo's record because there is a vast network all across this country that engages in a kind of Islamophobia, a hatred and bigotry toward the Muslim faith that is completely un-American but is also deeply antithetical to American national security interests because if we really want to make this country safe, then we have to be building constant active bridges to Muslim communities in the United States and to our Muslim partners around the world. When you trade in Islamophobia, a fear of Muslims, you are adding bulletin board material to recruiters who want to write a story about how America is at war with the East, how America is at war with the Islamic faith.

For much of his congressional career, Mike Pompeo was deeply intertwined with this network of anti-Muslim organizations. There is a really interesting study that I hope some of you will take a look at that details this network of organizations. They have fairly innocuous-sounding names, like the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, the Middle East Forum, the Investigative Project on Terrorism, Jihad Watch, ACT for America, the Center for Security Policy, the Society of Americans for National Existence. Those sound like things I might be for, but if you really take a look at what they do, they preach intolerance. They try to tell Americans that all Muslims are out to get them and that we are better off if we just shelter ourselves from people of the Muslim faith. That makes us less safe, and it morally weakens us as a nation. It is not coincidental that all of these groups sprang up or began to receive substantial funding after Barack Obama became President of the United States. It wasn't coincidental that as Donald Trump was going on cable news casting doubt on whether the President of the United States was really an American citizen or whether he was a secret Kenyan citizen planted in the United States that all of these organizations started to take root. They gained legitimacy because American political leaders associated themselves with their cause because they were able to lure Members of Congress like Mike Pompeo into their web.

Mike Pompeo went on these radio shows that traded in these conspiracy

theories about Muslims. He allowed for his name and his office to be associated with their causes. At one point, he actually accepted an award from a group called ACT for America, which is arguably the largest anti-Muslim group in America. They gave him an award saying that "Representative Mike Pompeo has been a steadfast ally of ours since the day he was elected to Congress." This is an organization that the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center classify as a hate group. Their founder said practicing Muslims "cannot be loyal citizens of the United States."

Let me say that again. The founder of the group that gave Mike Pompeo an award for being a steadfast ally of their cause said that practicing Muslims cannot be loyal citizens of the United States. These anti-Muslim groups became stronger, became more deeply intertwined into the mainstream because they have allies like Mike Pompeo. It wasn't a coincidence when a Presidential candidate stood up and said: If you elect me, I will ban all Muslims from the United States, that he wasn't laughed off the debate stage. He wasn't laughed off the debate stage because this conspiracy of Islamophobia had penetrated the mainstream because of its access to people like the nominee to be Secretary of State. That is disqualifying to me. That is not about Mike Pompeo's views. It is not about my differences with the policies he is going to espouse as a Secretary of State. That speaks to his qualifications.

This is one of the most important debates we are going to have. These are exceptional times for both Republicans and Democrats, dealing with an administration that conducts itself very differently from others. When it comes down to it, I don't think that by casting a "no" vote I am violating the traditions of this body, which have admittedly given deference to the President in some of these choices for Cabinet positions.

I don't think Mike Pompeo really understands the importance of the separation of powers between the Congress and the Executive when it comes to war-making. I don't think this is a Secretary of State who is going to walk into the room when big decisions are being made on foreign policy and argue the diplomacy portfolio. By virtue of his longstanding association with groups that argued values antithetical to a diverse America, arguing that Muslims have no place in this country, I don't think he passes the test when it comes to a Secretary of State who doesn't have an association with prejudice. That would disqualify him from being an effective advocate for us in parts of the world that practice faiths different than ours. So, for those reasons, I am going to be voting no on Mike Pompeo's nomination. At the same time, as I said at the outset, I acknowledge there are arguments for his nomination, and I will hope my fears

are unfounded. I will hope that he, if he gets confirmation from this body—which it looks like he will—is an advocate for diplomacy, that he understands the proper role of Congress, and that he represents all Americans when he serves us overseas. I certainly hope that to be the case. I hope I am wrong about my reservations, but I will still cast a "no" vote when his nomination comes before the Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as with many of my colleagues here today, I stand before you to voice my deep concern over the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be our next Secretary of State.

President Trump has tweeted about Senate Democrats that it is "hard to believe obstructionists may vote against Mike Pompeo for Secretary of State." Others have accused Democrats of playing politics, pointing to past Secretary of State confirmation votes that have faced less opposition in the Foreign Relations Committee and on the Senate floor, but this inference that we simply should rubberstamp Secretary of State nominees is misplaced.

Like all of my colleagues, I take my article II advice and consent responsibility very seriously, so I would like to state why I oppose Mr. Pompeo's nomination to be Secretary of State.

My opposition is not about politics. It really isn't about policy either. While I disagree vehemently with many of Mr. Pompeo's positions on issues such as human rights, climate change, and the Iran nuclear deal, these differences alone are not enough to disqualify him or any nominee, for that matter. Fundamentally, my opposition to Mr. Pompeo's nomination is about whether he can credibly fulfill his duties as our Nation's chief diplomat. Can he effectively and faithfully advocate for American diplomacy at home and abroad?

In this regard, as one of my esteemed colleagues said while introducing Mr. Pompeo before the Foreign Relations Committee, "Your background does matter."

So this is what concerns me about Mr. Pompeo's past. Mr. Pompeo was OK characterizing an Indian-American political opponent as "just another 'turban topper' we don't need in Congress or any political office that deals with the U.S. Constitution, Christianity and the United States of America." With a viewpoint like that, how can he credibly represent the millions of Indian Americans in the United States? Equally important, how can the United States be viewed credibly by India's 1.3 billion people, the world's largest democracy and a critical American partner in promoting American values and ideals in Asia in the face of a rising and ever more aggressive China? Sadly, that display of intolerance wasn't Mr. Pompeo's only past offense.

Mr. Pompeo has suggested homosexuality is "perversion," an insinuation Mr. Pompeo ever so cleverly did not address when questioned by my colleague Senator BOOKER. At the CIA, he also canceled a Pride Month event which featured a discussion on the importance of diversity and an appearance by the parents of Matthew Shepard, a young man beaten, tortured, and left to die in Wyoming on account of his sexual orientation. How can the United States stand with the LGBTQ people of Chechnya who have been the victims of violence simply because of whom they love if our Nation's top diplomat has disparaged who they are?

The offenses continue. Following the horrific Patriots Day marathon in Boston, Mr. Pompeo falsely alleged that American Muslim leaders were "potentially complicit" in violent acts for failing to speak out. Under my questioning at the confirmation hearings, he refused to apologize for these comments. Why was I concerned? It happened in Boston. Why was I concerned? Because the Muslim leaders in Boston had spoken out against that attack on our Nation on Patriots Day, on marathon day in Boston.

Mr. Pompeo has said he disagrees with the characterization of his comment, but there is nothing to characterize on the floor of the House of Representatives. His comments disparaging Muslim leaders are part of the public record.

How can Mr. Pompeo effectively represent America to Muslim leaders around the world who are just as interested as we are in preventing religiously motivated violence?

Mr. Pompeo now claims these statements were meant to demonstrate that tackling extremism requires those who are the most credible voices to take an unambiguous stand against violence. Well, as the Secretary of State, Mr. Pompeo would be considered our most credible diplomatic voice around the world. How could Muslim nations ever feel respected when our top diplomat has voiced such unambiguous hate?

Mr. Pompeo cowrote an article on migrants that blamed Sweden's "radical" immigration policy on "political correctness." America must be a leader in finding pathways to protect Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis fleeing the death and destruction of war, in sheltering the Rohingya seeking shelter from oppression in Burma, and in addressing the countless other refugee crises roiling the globe and threatening our collective security. That is not political correctness; that is our moral responsibility.

America is a nation built by immigrants and refugees. Some 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Google, Tesla, Yahoo, Intel, and eBay are all companies that were founded by immigrants. Given these past statements, could Mr. Pompeo truly represent the interests of a nation made up of and built by immigrants? I do not believe that he can.

In the fight against violent extremism, there is no more divisive issue that erodes our ability to effectively cooperate with other governments than the use of torture. Mr. Pompeo has said that he won't rule out bringing back the abhorrent practice of waterboarding. A man who has said that those who carried out such actions were "not torturers, they are patriots" will not be able to credibly convey to governments with histories of human rights abuses that these actions are reprehensible with any semblance of moral authority.

Today, French President Emmanuel Macron addressed Congress and urged us to rejoin the international community in the commitment to combating climate change. He rightfully said that there is no planet B. But Mr. Pompeo characterized the Paris negotiations as an "elitist effort to reduce the power of the United States economy," when, in fact, it was a historic effort by almost every country in the world to tackle a global challenge that will be an existential threat to every single person on the planet.

I believe in American ingenuity, American enterprise, and American leadership. I believe America must lead the world in solutions to this generational challenge. But how can we expect Mr. Pompeo to lead the Department of State in bringing greater peace, security, and prosperity to the American people through international engagement if he does not believe in U.S. leadership, if he does not believe that the United States is necessary for solving global problems, especially global warming?

Mr. Pompeo has too much to apologize for, too many statements to retract or explain, and too many controversial positions to defend.

Of most concern are Mr. Pompeo's past statements suggesting that he values military force over diplomacy even when diplomacy is a real option.

While negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program were underway, he argued that military strikes on Iran were preferable to diplomacy and that "it is under 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity. This is not an insurmountable task for the coalition forces."

Just a few weeks ago, under my questioning during his confirmation hearing, he did not rule out a military solution in North Korea, which would be disastrous for the 230,000 Americans who live on the Korean Peninsula. There is no military solution to the North Korean nuclear threat. Only through sustained diplomacy and economic pressure, in close coordination with our allies, will we be able to negotiate peaceful denuclearization of North Korea.

America's top diplomat should embody the best of America's values and diplomatic traditions, not attack people's race, defend torture, promote division, ignore human rights, propose military force as the primary solution

to our problems around the world, or reject solutions to the climate change that is threatening our planet.

The President can choose his own Cabinet, yes, but the Senate must advise and consent. No one wants to see the United States without a top diplomat, especially at such an important time in world affairs, but having a Secretary of State who has so thoroughly disqualified himself from credibly doing the job is no better.

Yes, I see and respect the former soldier and Member of Congress, the strong intellect who graduated first in his West Point class and edited the Harvard Law Review, but I also see and hear Mr. Pompeo's past comments and his more recent comments and positions that many who support him are conveniently choosing to disregard. But we cannot do that.

So I advise President Trump to choose a Secretary of State who embodies the best of America's values and diplomatic traditions and communicates them to the rest of the world, and I do not consent to the nomination of Mr. Pompeo, who is not the person for this important task.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, at a time when we are facing serious international challenges, from Russian meddling, to North Korean sabre-rattling, to an increasingly assertive China, it is very essential that the President have a qualified Secretary of State whom he trusts to be on the job.

Mike Pompeo unquestionably understands the international challenges we face and is more than capable of being a very effective Secretary of State. When I talk to our allies, they are anxious to see him on the job.

Unfortunately, some on the other side of the aisle are now claiming that he is not suited for the post of Secretary of State because of positions he took as a Member of Congress or his holding to traditional Christian teachings, as if a person's religion ought to have something to say about their being in public office or public service. Others have spoken about that, and I don't have a whole lot more to add on that point. I would note the irony, though, that many of the Senators who are most likely to vote against Cabinet nominees are also rumored to have Presidential ambitions. They should ask themselves if they truly want to live with the precedent they are setting.

You don't have to like the President personally or support the President's policies, but as an American, it is in all of our interests to have a fully functioning executive branch, especially when it comes to foreign policy.

If a mainstream Republican former Member of Congress is deemed unacceptable because of his beliefs, how should mainstream Republicans vote when faced with future nominees who do not share the beliefs that Repub-

licans hold? Should Republicans just willy-nilly vote against any future nominee who does not share our political or religious views?

That said, I would like to focus on other attributes of Director Pompeo's which some have criticized but which I see as assets.

By all accounts, this nominee's tenure at the CIA has been a success. However, some Senators who supported him then are now arguing that he should not be Secretary of State because he is not diplomatic enough.

First, let's dismiss the more radical talking points about his being a warmonger. The theory is that President Trump is liable to start a war at any moment, so we need to force him, as President, to have Cabinet officials surrounding him who will counteract his impulses. We could have a hypothetical debate about whether, if the American people elect a warmonger as President, he should be allowed to appoint a warmonger Cabinet, but suffice it to say that I don't think that label applies to Mike Pompeo or Donald Trump, and I view such accusations as simply cheap partisan talking points.

On the other hand, it is fair to say that Mike Pompeo doesn't always couch his words in diplomatic niceties. He doesn't mince words about the threats that we face. And his time at the CIA has surely enhanced his strategic thinking. That is good, and that is exactly what we need at the State Department. We need less diplomatic double-talk and more clear-eyed, strategic thinking about international threats.

Real diplomacy isn't always about sweet talk. Sometimes it requires taking a firm stand, and to be effective, it should be part of a strategic vision that incorporates all the elements of statecraft. For instance, I hope we have finally discarded once and for all the diplomatic impulse to make unilateral concessions to President Putin in hopes they will be reciprocated, as exemplified by the Obama-Clinton reset. We all know it didn't really reset. If you understand Russian history and Russian political culture, you know that Russians, especially from a KGB pedigree, are likely to see this as a sign of weakness to be exploited. Diplomatic overtures to the Russians without a corresponding demonstration of strength are simply an invitation to further aggression and misbehavior.

I think we are finally arriving at a bipartisan consensus that Russia is a major geopolitical foe. Mike Pompeo has made clear that he has no doubts about the threat from Russia. He understands the need to push back and push back hard against Russia's attempt to dominate its neighbors and sow discord in the West. The threat from Russia will need a strategic plan that integrates all the elements of statecraft, including government-to-government diplomacy alongside military deterrence, intelligence and counterintelligence, cyber security, and

public diplomacy, just to name a few, and there are a lot of others.

Another area where some clear-eyed strategic thinking is even more crucial is our approach to the People's Republic of China. So I just stated: Consider China a bigger threat than Russia. I just returned from a trip to China with several colleagues at the beginning of this month. It was an eye-opener. We hear a lot about how China is embracing capitalism and becoming more and more like us. Just don't believe it. The Chinese Communist Party has modified its economic policy to allow for economic growth, but it still serves the interests of the state, not the interests of the people. It is not a free market, clearly, because they admit that their economic system is what they would call authoritative capitalism, aka mercantilism.

I visited with government officials at the national and local level, Chinese and American businesses, and American diplomats. The Chinese officials and the Chinese businesses had their talking points down almost too well. However, the impression that I took away from the visit is that the Chinese Government will do anything—legal or illegal, moral or immoral, ethical or unethical—to get ahead of the United States, and when they get ahead, to stay ahead.

China coined the term “peaceful rise” to describe its drive to become a great power, which is designed to sound very benign. In fact, China later changed this slogan “peaceful rise” to “peaceful development” out of concern that the word “rise” sounds threatening. Just to be clear, I am not threatened by Chinese economic growth.

The development of a truly peaceful, free market democracy, no matter how large, would not be threatening because democracies generally do not threaten each other, and free enterprise is mutually beneficial. The fact that so many Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty and into the middle class is a good news story for humanity. It is also good for the United States. The more Chinese people who can afford to buy our pork and soybeans, our John Deere tractors, and our advanced manufacturing, the better for Iowa and our national economy.

Free trade on a level playing field enriches both participants. Unfortunately, China is not interested in a level playing field. It seeks dominance economically, militarily, and politically. Confucius said: “Heaven does not have two suns and the people do not have two kings.” By the same token, the Chinese leadership does not think there is room for two great powers in the world.

China seeks the advantage of trade with the United States but not mutually beneficial free trade in the spirit of the WTO. Despite having a middle class that is bigger than ours in the United States in absolute numbers, China still claims to need special pref-

erences extended to developing countries. China erects nontariff barriers in ways that just very barely skirt triggering WTO compliance in violation of the spirit of the level playing field the WTO seeks to create.

The Chinese military is 60 percent larger than the U.S. military, and its efforts to claim exclusive control over the South China Sea, in violation of international law by creating artificial islands, reveals an expansionist impulse. You can't hide those islands. You know it implies dominance.

However, the threat from China is not mainly military. The influential ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu focused on the role of deception over combat. He famously said: “To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

Now, get this. The problem we face is, we are being treated like an enemy to be subdued without realizing it. I say all of this not to be an alarmist but to point out that China sees itself in a long-term strategic struggle with the United States. We don't need to overreact to this fact, but we do need to be aware and to apply some clear-eyed strategic thinking of our own. In that respect, Mike Pompeo's unique background seems perfectly aligned with the task ahead to develop a strategic foreign policy toward China incorporating all the elements of statecraft.

Because I have mentioned aspects of Chinese culture to illuminate the strategic thinking on the part of the People's Republic of China, I don't want to give the impression that this is a clash of civilizations. On the contrary, it is not traditional Chinese culture that is the problem; it is the unreconstructed Leninist nature of the state system that is the problem.

It is sometimes claimed that Chinese culture is not compatible with democracy, but that is hogwash. The proof to the contrary is the Republic of China on Taiwan. Taiwan is a fully functioning, prosperous democracy with the same Chinese culture and traditions.

This same democracy is what mainland China could have also if it is able to shed its one-party dictatorship, and I hope it will shed that someday.

In the meantime, we need leaders in our government who see China clearly and have the ability to think strategically. Mike Pompeo seems to me to be just that kind of a person, so I am happy to support his confirmation as Secretary of State.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Mr. President, as the Senate considers the nomination of Mike Pompeo

to be Secretary of State, we have to ask ourselves many questions. Among them are these: Will Mr. Pompeo offer the kind of independent judgment that is necessary to help restrain President Trump's worst impulses, or will he be somebody who becomes a “yes” man to the President of the United States? Will Mr. Pompeo continue in his past attitude, which reflects a “shoot first, ask questions later” approach to foreign policy? And can somebody like Mr. Pompeo, who has made very divisive, polarizing, and, in fact, hateful remarks here in the United States be able to reflect American values abroad?

I regret to conclude that I do not think Mr. Pompeo can pass these tests, and I will oppose his nomination for Secretary of State.

We all know that our country is facing formidable challenges. Armed conflicts are raging in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, creating refugee crises across borders. Russia's campaign to undermine Western democracies continues at pace and has sharpened divisions in our society. It has bolstered populous movements at home and abroad, and we have seen terrorist networks continue to expand their reach into information space. Changes in our climate have resulted in drought, natural disaster, and famine, and as the President of France reminded a joint session of Congress today, there is no planet B.

Of the many crises we are confronting, at least one of them is entirely of President Trump's own making, and that is the potential unraveling of the Iran nuclear agreement. Let me say that I agree with all of those who believe that we should never allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. That is exactly why it is so important to keep that agreement in place.

In just a few weeks, President Trump will make a decision. He will decide whether to waive the nuclear-related sanctions on Iran in order to keep the Iran agreement intact or whether to blow up that agreement.

As the President of France reminded us today, that agreement was forged with our European allies, Russia and China, and yet it has cut off Iran's pathways to nuclear bombs, it has imposed very tough constraints on their nuclear program, and it has subjected Iran to the most comprehensive inspection and monitoring regime ever negotiated—an inspection regime that would disappear if we backed out of that agreement, leaving us blind to exactly what the Iranians were doing with respect to their nuclear program.

Our State Department, our Defense Department, and our intelligence community have all assessed time and again that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. Secretary of Defense Mattis testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee just last fall that the Iran deal was in the national security interest of the United States. Despite that consensus even

among the President's current team, the President is talking about recklessly shredding the agreement.

As President Macron of France warned us today, such a move would be very reckless and it would be reckless to replace what we have today without having something to substitute for it.

Mr. Pompeo has weighed in on this issue over the years. It is not only that he has been a fierce opponent of the Iran deal, but he has proposed military strikes against Iran. In 2014, he said that it would take "under 2,000 sorties to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity. This is not an insurmountable task for the coalition forces."

That is a dangerous illusion—the notion that there would be absolutely no response to an American attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Iran, of course, is right next door to Iraq, where the United States spent an ill-fated number of years, at a great loss of lives both to Americans and Iraqis and at great cost to the public. To just talk offhand about bombing Iran as the solution is not the kind of sentiment or mindset that we want in the Secretary of State for the United States of America.

The idea that he somehow had a conversion to diplomacy is difficult to believe, given the testimony that he has provided and the statements that he has made.

We also know that we are at an inflection point when it comes to the situation in North Korea. In a span of just a few months, President Trump has veered from taunting Kim Jong Un over Twitter to recently calling him "very honorable." We are all rooting for diplomacy to succeed in North Korea, but we all know that the opening rounds are, in fact, the easiest legs, and that reaching a credible and lasting accord with North Korea will take significant time, hard bargaining, and the support of our partners and allies in the region.

When it comes to Russia, President Trump's affection for President Putin continues unabated. Two weeks ago, he rejected the sanctions on Russian companies found to be assisting Syria's chemical weapons program, contradicting his own U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Then, he earlier congratulated Putin on winning the election—an election that we all know was a sham election and that the outcome was never in doubt. It was marred by ballot stuffing and forced voting, and it was hardly what you would call a fair and free election.

When it comes to Russia, despite appeals from Republicans and Democrats in this body and in other parts of the country, the President has decided not to take action to address the threat of Russian cyber attacks in our upcoming elections. In fact, Admiral Rogers, the former head of the U.S. Cyber Command, testified just in February that President Trump had not directed him to confront Russian cyber operations at their source.

So while Mr. Pompeo has said that Russia will meddle again in our midterm elections, he has been much quieter and softer since his nomination was presented by the President with respect to President Trump's soft approach to Russia and Putin.

It is also a fact that our next Secretary of State will be responsible for managing tens of thousands of Foreign Service officers, civil servants, and locally employed staff of the State Department at our embassies and consulates overseas.

We all know that at the State Department today, we are witnessing historically low morale. In his budget, President Trump has tried to gut the State Department of its personnel and resources, issuing two budgets in a row that cut the State Department's budget by over 30 percent. You cannot conduct the diplomacy of the greatest country on Earth with two hands tied behind your back. Yet I heard nothing from Mr. Pompeo about challenging the President with respect to the deep cuts to the State Department and the resources that he will have available to him to conduct American diplomacy.

There is also the very long history of really awful remarks that Mike Pompeo has made toward various minority groups here in the United States, including Muslims and the LGBT community. You have to wonder how somebody who has made these comments is going to be able to oversee a State Department that has patriotic Americans who are Muslim Americans, who are LGBT, and who come from other minority groups. How do you lead an agency when you have made those kinds of comments about people in your workforce? And how do you represent American values overseas when you have disregarded those important values here at home?

Mr. Pompeo has said that Muslims "abhor Christians." He has said that all Muslim leaders were "potentially complicit" in acts of terrorism. He has made other statements and has not condemned statements made by groups that were supporting him.

We have heard today from the President of France, Mr. Macron, a speech that uplifted the best of American values and French values. It was a speech that could have been given by earlier American Presidents, Republican or Democrat. He called upon America, France, the NATO allies, and other freedom-loving democracies and countries that respect the rule of law to seize the mantle of leadership.

He said:

We can actively contribute together to building the 21st-century world order for our people, for all people. The United States and Europe have a historical role in this respect, because it is the only way to defend what we believe in, to promote our universal values, to express strongly that human rights, the rights of minorities, and shared liberty are the true answer to the disorders of the world.

He warned against using anger and fear to divide us. He said:

We are living in a time of anger and fear because of the global threats, but these feel-

ings did not build anything. You can play with fear and anger for a time, but they do not construct anything.

What we have heard from President Trump is exactly the stirring of anger and division that the President of France warned about in his talk today to the Congress. It is those fears that President Trump has sought to exploit rather than to rise above and to lead.

As I look at the record of Mr. Pompeo and as I listen to the statements he has made, including many repulsive statements about different groups within the United States, I have to conclude that he does not reflect the great tradition in American foreign policy of standing up for those universal values that the President of France talked about today. It is a sad moment in our history when it requires a President from France to remind us of those universal values.

France has been a leader in the world, but the United States has been the chief organizer of the post-World War II era. And our friends in France, in England, in Germany, and other allies not just in Europe but around the world have stood with us. Yet, in this administration, we see a full retreat from that kind of American leadership around the world.

I regret to conclude that, looking at Mr. Pompeo's record and statements, he is part of the retreat and not part of the leadership that we need in the 21st century. So I ask my colleagues to oppose this nomination. We can do better. We need to remind every Member of this body that the United States has always stood up for those values that are in our Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution, and we need to uphold those values in the conduct of our foreign policy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

DARK MONEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues and to associate myself with their remarks on the critically important issue of unlimited and unaccountable money in our political system. I would like to thank my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, for organizing this speaking series and for being a national leader on the issue of campaign finance reform.

While my colleagues make important points about how our rigged campaign finance system can and does serve as a channel for anonymous billionaires and special interests to exert undue influence across our political system, I would like to focus my remarks on a related issue: how our broken campaign finance system also threatens our national security.

There is no serious dispute that malign foreign actors like Russia are working to subvert our democratic processes and sow chaos in our political system. As we have seen, their strategies depend not on direct conventional attacks upon our Nation, but an

asymmetric approach that exploits the existing divisions and vulnerabilities of our open society, our democratic institutions, and our free markets.

Even though we are now aware of this, we have not taken the necessary steps to repair the situation. Indeed, our Nation retains a campaign finance system that empowers anonymous donors to funnel unlimited amounts of money to influence public policy at every level of government, and to hide their actions behind corporations.

This misguided system, which fell into place in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision in 2010, allegedly has been exploited by foreign adversaries to advance their agendas on our soil.

How does this threat work? Prior to *Citizens United*, an incorporated entity did not have the same right as a flesh-and-blood human being to make contributions and expenditures in elections. This distinction makes sense. Corporations typically are permanent legal entities. They can amass outsized sums of wealth and, critically, they can shield the human beings behind them from scrutiny and liability. It is easier for those who wish to circumvent the laws protecting our democratic system to do so from behind a corporate mask. Thus, when the Supreme Court gave corporations the right to make unlimited independent expenditures in elections, it also opened the door for those who wish to hide their election spending to cover their tracks with shell companies and other entities that only exist on paper.

Our Nation historically has sought to safeguard our system of government from foreign influence. The Constitution requires the President to be a natural-born citizen. Early lobbying disclosure reforms were crafted with the threat of foreign propaganda in mind. And it remains a Federal crime for a foreign national, directly or indirectly, to spend money to influence our elections. But how can we know that authorities have the tools they need to enforce the law consistently when the law permits donors to funnel unlimited sums into elections and cover their tracks with shell corporations?

There are serious allegations that foreign actors have taken advantage of this vulnerability in our system. CNN reported in early April that Special Counsel Mueller is investigating whether Russian oligarchs used donations to think tanks, political action committees, and straw donors to cover their illegal campaign spending in the 2016 cycle.

One figure who is suspected of this type of malign influence-peddling is Alexander Torshin. Torshin is the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Russia, a close Putin ally, and was recently sanctioned by the Trump administration, along with other oligarchs and high-ranking Russian Government officials. Multiple press reports stemming from documents turned over to congressional investigations by Trump

campaign associates detail how Torshin allegedly cultivated people associated with the NRA to influence the 2016 election. His ultimate goal allegedly was to arrange a meeting during the campaign between then-Candidate Trump and Putin. Press reports indicate that the FBI is currently investigating whether Torshin illegally funneled money to the NRA to assist the Trump campaign in particular.

Indeed, if Russia did use the NRA to circumvent public scrutiny of its electoral meddling, it would have been following the same pattern as the Koch network. Robert McGuire from the Center for Responsive Politics stated: "We've seen some of the groups in the Koch network give large, six and seven figure grants to the NRA—knowing that the NRA is going to spend the money on ads in an election. . . . The Russians could easily have funneled money into the NRA coffers using a similar pathway. . . . A legal, ostensibly apolitical donation to the NRA by Russia could have freed up other restricted funds to spend on politics."

While money is fungible, it is quite striking that the NRA spent over \$30 million to assist the Trump campaign—two-and-a-half times more than what it spent in 2012 to assist Mitt Romney.

These allegations regarding links between Russia and the NRA are among the most widely reported, but there is evidence of other instances where Kremlin-linked oligarchs and their allies allegedly directed money into American elections. For example, Viktor Vekselberg, another close Putin ally and oligarch who made billions from a government-sanctioned oil deal, allegedly funneled over \$250,000 through a U.S. corporation run by his cousin to spend on the 2016 election. The cousin had no prior history as a major political donor before the last election cycle. Vekselberg was also recently sanctioned by the Trump administration for his close ties to Putin and alleged role in advancing Russia's malign influence activities. Special Counsel Mueller is also reportedly investigating whether Vekselberg funneled money into the 2016 election.

These are two illustrations of how those from Putin's inner circle may have sought to influence our elections. Some of these methods may appear legal because the source of the money on paper was a person who is legally allowed to make expenditures on American elections. But experts, like Louise Shelley, director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at George Mason University, doubt that these sums could have entered our political process without approval from the Kremlin. As she puts it: "If you have investments in Russia, then you cannot be sure that they are secure if you go against the Kremlin's will. You can't be an enormously rich person in Russia, or even hold large holdings in Russia, without being in Putin's clutches."

If sophisticated special interest groups in our country rely on dark money to pursue their political agendas, and the Kremlin and Kremlin-linked actors can exploit this vulnerability, then it stands to reason that other foreign actors can also manipulate our system. As long as we maintain a system wherein a political spender can be a corporation that received money from another corporation, which, in turn, received money from yet another corporation, there will be no accountability in our campaign finance system.

Even if it cannot be proved that illegal campaign spending is changing electoral outcomes, I believe it is unacceptable for our Nation to knowingly permit an open conduit for foreign meddling in our elections, which has an effect on our national security. Our system of government depends on public faith that election results reflect the will of the American people.

Going forward, I intend to speak further on this topic and work on ways to give authorities much stronger tools to prosecute the laundering of foreign money in our campaign finance system. In my view, this is not just an administrative or an election issue; this is a national security and international criminal issue, and as such, there should be investigations and prosecutions on that scale. I invite my colleagues to work with me on this important issue, and I thank my colleagues again for highlighting the need to take unaccountable money out of our politics.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, at 12 noon on Thursday, April 26, there be 4 minutes of debate, equally divided; that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Pompeo nomination; that if cloture is invoked, all time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation without intervening action or debate. I further ask that following disposition of the Pompeo nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Grenell nomination, with the time until 1:45 p.m. equally divided in the usual form; and that at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. I further ask that if cloture is invoked, all time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation without intervening action or debate; and that with respect to both nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid

upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Hawaii.

DARK MONEY

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, in his confirmation hearing last January, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said there was evidence that climate change had actually leveled off over the past two decades.

In response to Mr. Pruitt's comments, an atmospheric scientist in California named Benjamin Santer pulled together some colleagues to study satellite data from around the world. They found that Mr. Pruitt was in fact wrong, and they prepared to publish their findings in *Nature Scientific Reports*.

Then something pretty weird happened. A few of the scientists came forward and said that they didn't want their names listed on the research. They were worried about their ability to get a green card in the United States. Mr. Santer told the *New Yorker* that this was the first time in his life that he had seen his colleagues fear putting their names on research because they were worried about the negative consequences for themselves and their families.

In this country, scientists should not work in fear. They should not worry about their work being politicized. But this is where we are, and it is a moment that has been carefully planned by a small group of people who do not want the United States to act on climate. Because of these groups, the United States is home to the only major political party that opposes climate action. Because of these groups, Scott Pruitt—a man who denies that climate change is real and that it is caused by humans—is running the Federal Agency charged with dealing with climate change.

For too long, these groups have gone unchallenged, their web of deceit untouched. So I am joining with my colleagues to shine a light on these groups and how they have warped our ability to make good choices.

The Heartland Institute was started in 1984, ostensibly by a group of Libertarians. Each of their positions boils down to the idea that the government has no role—not to work on ending tobacco use or to define what health insurance should look like. But they are especially focused on keeping the government from doing anything about climate change.

The Heartland Institute denies that climate change is happening, and I disagree with them. Ninety-seven percent of all climate scientists disagree with them. But they are not playing by the average think tank rules because they are not your normal think tank. Over the years, the Heartland Institute has gained a reputation for, as one website put it, being a mouthpiece for the cor-

porations who fund it, and their funders are very, very hard to track because Heartland keeps its donations secret. But we know that donors like the Koch brothers, ExxonMobil, and the Mercers are some of Heartland's biggest funders, and these donors just so happen to benefit from American inaction on climate.

If the government does what Heartland wants and stops protecting the environment, these people will profit. It is almost as if the Heartland Institute exists to promote the interests of its donors.

Last year, they mailed a package to hundreds of thousands of science teachers. It had pamphlets, a DVD, and a book called "Why Scientists Disagree about Global Warming." The mass mailing was an effort to disseminate fossil fuel industry talking points as curriculum for science teachers. They tried to send it to every middle school, high school, and college teacher in the country.

The institute has also done everything it can to defend Mr. Pruitt, who is being investigated for a historic number of ethical lapses. Heartland wrote a letter to the White House just recently that called on the President to continue supporting Mr. Pruitt. The letter said the 10 ethical investigations into Mr. Pruitt amount to "an orchestrated political campaign by [the President's] enemies."

Heartland also supports a new proposed EPA rule, and—get this one—it is a new EPA rule that will restrict the use of scientific studies in EPA decision making. It will restrict the use of science in EPA decision making.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Lung Association, and the National Council for Science and the Environment are some of the 50 science organizations and higher education institutions that have opposed the new rule. But the Heartland Institute is for this rule.

I want to be really clear about this. This isn't about someone having a conservative ideology or different view from mine about what our energy future ought to be. There is no leftwing equivalent of the institute that acts like this. Brookings, the Center for American Progress, and other left-leaning think tanks all have dissent within their ranks, and even on the right, AEI and many others have legitimate academic discussions within the context of their political philosophy. That is not what this is. These other think tanks do not ignore scientific facts because they are real think tanks. But Heartland is not a think tank in any true sense of the word. Their work is focused not on promoting analysis based on science but on trashing analysis based on science. If you don't know that, then you can easily think they are legitimate.

For example, the Heartland Institute sends a monthly newsletter about climate issues to every legislator in the

country—State and Federal. It is actually a pretty good-looking product. This is a copy of it. It is actually really well done and well laid out in color, so it is not immediately obvious that this isn't even analysis. It looks like a publication from a scientific institution.

The people they quote or rely on for data are almost always from industry-supported think tanks funded by the same people. This month, they highlighted one of their own policy analysts who said that Oklahoma should not subsidize wind power because the industry can't survive without subsidies. They claim that wind energy is far less reliable and far more expensive than the power derived from fossil fuel. Who benefits from that analysis?

The fact is that wind energy is now the largest source of reliable electricity-generating capacity in the United States. In Oklahoma alone at least 30 percent of all power consumption comes from wind farms, and subsidies for fossil fuels are 40 times those for clean energy.

Also in their April newsletter, Heartland claims that natural gas has little effect on global temperatures. But recent evidence shows that methane emissions from oil and gas are vastly undercounted.

The temperature data on the back cover of this newsletter is from a climate denier at the University of Alabama whose data is considered unreliable and biased by the vast majority of the scientific community. This is not normal intellectual dissent within the scientific community. This is not normal political dissent about what our energy future should be. These people are propagating propaganda. This is not the work of a legitimate think tank. A legitimate think tank does not ignore facts and evidence. It does not publish data from a climate denier who is known in the science community for publishing work loaded with errors.

They are pushing us away from science and from doing the hard work of protecting and preserving our country's clean air and water so that a few of their donors can continue to make as much money as possible.

I was pleased with President Macron's speech today. There was so much he reminded us that we had in common, not just between America and France but between Democrats and Republicans. As he reminded us of our great history together, as he reminded us of our cultural exchange, as he reminded us of our military cooperation, he also reminded us that our great democracies believe in science. We have to believe in science. We have to believe in expertise. It is absolutely appropriate.

The Presiding Officer and I do not share the same political philosophy, but we have to share the same set of facts. That is what is so damaging about a so-called think tank like Heartland. They are not like AEI; they are not like CAP; they are not like Brookings. They are not like any other

think tank in Washington, DC, that on the level, from the standpoint of their own political philosophy and their own objectives, tries to get the right answer. That is an absolutely appropriate function for an institution to serve in this city, but what these guys do is not that.

I think it is very important that we draw a distinction between those who are relying upon facts and science, and those who are not. That is why I wanted to point out what Heartland is all about.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is hard to find the words that will truly reflect what an abomination the campaign finance system in America has become. The fact is, the only people who seem happy with the current state of campaign finance are billionaires who have phones full of contact information of the most powerful people in the land. Otherwise, if you are a typical American—putting in a hard day's work, supporting your family—you probably have the sense the campaign finance laws are rigged for the big and the powerful.

There was an era when running for office was as simple as putting your name out for the public, getting a few local civic groups in your corner, and bringing in a few modest donations to get your campaign off the ground. Certainly, it is not that way anymore. It has now been well chronicled how a wave of money—particularly from a few secretive powerful individuals like the Koch brothers—has flooded American politics in the last few decades. That has grown exponentially in the years since the Citizens United decision. The fact is, there has been a tidal wave of dark money buying influence across America's political system.

This isn't just about too many political ads on television and radio. Voters know that unless they unplug entirely and settle for a life out in the woods, they are going to see a lot of ads. Even beyond ads in the election season, there is this deluge of money buying the support of beltway think tanks, currying favor among lobbyists, funding so-called social welfare organizations that, frankly, aren't doing a whole lot of social welfare.

The bottom line is, for those like the Koch brothers, having deep pockets means you can buy the right to grab hold of the levers of power of the American Government. You can create a whole lot of noise that virtually drowns out the constituents back home.

I am heading home tomorrow. I have about nine townhall meetings sched-

uled in rural communities. They are always amazed that we are having those kinds of discussions—my colleague Senator MERKLEY does them as well—because it seems that in most of the country, everything that resembles the government we know so well, direct contact, open to all town meetings, is getting drowned out by a deluge of dollars that creates all of this noise—fake noise, to use the language of the times—that drives out real discussion about substantive issues.

I am going to talk about an example, one that has certainly generated some real concern over the last few months. If you want to see what is wrong with the election system, in my view, you don't have to look much further than some of the letters I have exchanged recently with the National Rifle Association. A few months ago, there were news reports of a potential financial relationship between a Russian oligarch close to Vladimir Putin and the NRA. The big question was whether the Russian money had been funneled into the NRA to assist the Trump campaign and influence the outcome of the election. In my view, I would say that is a question that most right-minded Americans would like to have answered.

I am the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, where we have jurisdiction over the Federal Tax Code. That includes the rules that pertain to political groups and tax-exempt 501(c)(4) organizations like the ones that are maintained by the NRA. I began in a series of letters that were sent to the organization, sent to the NRA, to ask questions about their foreign funding. The series of shifting answers I got in return from the NRA was enough to give you whiplash. First, when we inquired—because we had seen all of these news reports—they said: "Nothing to see here."

Then, as we followed up and found that a little hard to square with these public news reports, they said: "Well . . . we get foreign funding, but just from that ONE Russian, and that's it."

Then, we heard another version of what was going on at the NRA. They said it was a couple of dozen Russians giving money to the NRA. We continued to follow up, and they told the press and they told me: Hey, we are done with the Congress. We are not interested in answering any more questions. We are busy. We have other things to do.

That pretty much sums up the problem we have heard described on the floor this week with the campaign finance system. The information Americans have access to in campaign finance reports is just the tip of the iceberg, just the beginning of unpacking this whole question of where the money comes from in our political system. Everything under the waterline is where it gets seedy, but powerful interests have managed to figure out how to keep their handiwork hidden. The powerful use shell companies to mask the identities of who is funding campaigns

and so-called independent expenditures. Even simple questions asked of these powerful groups influencing campaigns—questions like, "Do you get money from overseas," the Congress and the American people cannot get a straight answer.

There are Members who want to see real changes made to bring some sunlight into this system. They see how important this is, giving the onslaught of attacks on the campaign finance laws that are coming from the Supreme Court. These attacks are one major reason why I have cosponsored legislation to create a constitutional amendment allowing Congress and the States to regulate and restore faith in our campaign finance system.

With respect to this approach, I didn't arrive at this judgment casually. Constitutional amendments, in my view, ought to be reserved for those situations when the delicate balance set up by the Founding Fathers has been upset or, in this case, jurisprudence that governs the system has also changed. That is the situation and the challenge our country faces today.

I know several Members of this body have put policy ideas forward. Many of them, in my view, have real merit. Virtually all of them, in my view, would be an improvement on this rotten abomination of a campaign finance system that exists today. Virtually every day folks back home get inundated with the smarmy political ads sponsored by groups that have these names that are just nonsense—names like the "American Association for American Values in America." There is one after another. I will hear about what citizens think about this during those nine townhall meetings that I am going to be having over the next few days at home. Citizens often say it is really good to have our elected officials do this. Sometimes they would kid me that we have more cows than we have voters.

Still, we are here to have this conversation because that is what I think the American political system ought to be about—direct communication, an ongoing discussion with voters, our actually being there, having the people we have the honor to represent be able to look us in the eye, to ask questions, and say: We want to hear your thoughts because we believe that is how we can hold you accountable. The flip side of that judgment is that they don't think they can do it with the campaign finance system I have described today.

All of this is fed by these reports about lawmakers who march up to Koch Industries in order to plead for support for one proposal or another. When people read these articles, they say that it sure feels like that is what the political system has become all about. It is why I have done even more open-to-all town meetings. It is one way that I can show, at least on our watch, that that is what we are doing to counter the fact that a handful of

the most powerful, like the Koch family, can generate a disproportionately loud voice in our system of government.

The fact is the campaign finance system is broken, and it is long past the time to have fixed it. I have appreciated my colleagues' coming to the floor this week to speak out on it.

I believe, as has been written, that this series of letters that I have exchanged with the NRA, just over the last few months, is a textbook case of how broken the campaign finance system is—what happens when powerful organizations and individuals like the Koch family can have a disproportionately large voice in the political system.

I think the Senate ought to get about the business of fixing this system and ending the current way in which political campaigns are financed, which, as I said when I began my remarks, is such an abomination that it doesn't pass the smell test.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, we are at a critical moment in world history, filled with innumerable dangers and challenges. Russia is causing enormous trouble attacking the foundation of democracies around the world, interfering in our elections, developing new tools to move public opinion in countries other than its own while hiding behind robotic social commentaries. We have a nuclear-armed North Korea seeking legitimacy and recognition and critical talks about to occur over the effort to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. Syria is not just in the grip of a civil war, it is in the grip of a fractured chaotic state as a result of the destruction of cities and towns throughout the nation, leaving them as destroyed shells of buildings with infrastructure completely decimated. We have a humanitarian crisis in Burma and Bangladesh with massive ethnic cleansing. We have four famines unfolding in Africa, with 20 million people at risk of starvation. In every place you look, there are more of these challenges related to corruption of foreign governments, to climate chaos, to civil conflict.

We need a Secretary of State who can help navigate our country in these difficult times. We need to be able to work with neighbors around the world, with allies around the world, exercising diplomacy in partnership with the strength of the United States.

I come to the floor to share that I have grave doubts that Mike Pompeo does not bring the right skills to this job. I am concerned about his choice of

military action over diplomacy in a position that is supposed to bring the art of diplomacy to its full execution. I am concerned about his statements of disrespect and dishonor to the fundamental nature of our Constitution under the first article that calls for Congress to be able to open the door to the exercise of military power, not the President. I am concerned about his deep-rooted conflicts of interest that may prevent him from tackling one of the gravest threats to humans on this planet; namely, climate change. So I will be voting against his nomination and felt it only appropriate to share more of my concerns.

Let's start with the issue of diplomacy. The United States led the world in working to stop the Iranian nuclear program, working with the P5+1 group of states and with Iran to say that such a program of developing the basic elements necessary for nuclear weapons was absolutely unacceptable and bringing to bear such international pressure that Iran said: We will agree to that. We will agree to that. We will dismantle our nuclear powerplant—our plutonium plant. We will fill it with concrete. We will proceed to eliminate the stockpile of uranium enriched up to 20 percent. They agreed to cut the stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 98 percent, to profoundly reduce its gas centrifuges, shutting down two-thirds of them. On top of that, Iran agreed to the most aggressive and furthest reaching inspections that the International Atomic Energy Agency has ever had in any agreement, giving us profound insights into the operation of their nuclear program or, to put it differently, profound insights into the operation of their program and the dismantlement of their program.

Yet Director Pompeo has condemned this effort in diplomacy to stop the uranium program. He has told me it was unneeded because Iran wasn't pursuing a nuclear weapon. Well, quite interesting, but Iran was pursuing, clearly developing, all the elements necessary to have a nuclear weapon, and that represented a significant threat to the United States of America, and this agreement stops that threat in its tracks. So he condemned it, not just saying it wasn't necessary but that it showed negotiations occurred "where we should have shown strength," and he said the United States "bowed when we should have stood tall."

What did he mean by that? He meant we didn't need an agreement in order to stop the Iranian nuclear program because we had something else. We had the sword that we could stop their nuclear program with, as he put it, "2,000 sorties"—"2,000 sorties," he said, "to destroy the Iranian nuclear capacity . . . is not an insurmountable task for [United States] coalition forces."

Simply carrying the sword and saying we could stop other nations from doing things by bombing them is not the expertise we need in a Secretary of State.

Then there is Mr. Pompeo's attacks on the Muslim community—falsely claiming that Islamic leaders in America were silent in the face of terrorist attacks like the Boston Marathon bombing. It was not true, but he chose to attack Muslim Americans—single them out for assault. He said they were "complicit" and failed in the "commitment to peace," not even bothering to get the facts in advance.

Then there is his longstanding opposition to equal rights for LGBTQ Americans. Much of what we try to do around the world is to lay out a vision of opportunity for all, and we should quit slamming doors in the faces of individuals around the globe who are pursuing personal happiness, opportunity, and success just as we try to end the door-slamming here at home—the discrimination, the prejudice, the hatred, the bigotry, but Mr. Pompeo engaged in calling the end of discrimination a "shocking abuse of power" when the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell*. Not only that, but when he went to the CIA and the mother of Matthew Shepard was scheduled to give a speech on hate crimes, he canceled, at the last second, her speech. He did not want the mother of a victim of hate crimes to talk about the crime against an LGBT American strapped to a wire fence and left to die. Shouldn't that be exactly the sort of speech that should be given about our respect for all Americans and about how much we stand against hate crimes?

So that is very disturbing, when you go into a world where respect for people of every religion, from every part of the world, is part of the negotiating power and strength of America. If you disrespect people, they do not join us in partnership to solve problems. So those are my concerns on the diplomacy side.

I am also concerned that he expressed a complete lack of interest in the constitutional power invested in article I, which is the article for Congress to declare war. He indicated that the President had unlimited power in article II, which is the ability to conduct a war after Congress has authorized it, but he seemed to completely overlook that first step of congressional authorization.

We have tried to encapsulate that congressional authorization in the War Powers Act, making it clear that the President cannot take us to war without a declaration of war or, second, without explicit authorization through something like an authorization for the use of military force or without a direct emergency involving an imminent attack on the United States, our assets, or our forces. It is the War Powers Act that embodies the heart of the Constitution about the conduct, the ability, and the limitations on the President to start a war. It is given to Congress to decide whether or not we can go to war, and Mr. Pompeo does not agree with that important, important congressional factor. I don't

know, quite frankly, how one can take the oath of office and not respect the Constitution as it delivers that power to this body, not to the President.

My third concern goes to the conflict of interest that he brought into consideration for this position. Specifically, it is the conflict of interest that he carries into his career through his very, very close association with the Koch brothers. He has been given the nickname “the Congressman from Koch.” The headquarters of Koch Industries is located in his district. The Koch brothers gave him the money to start his business. The Koch brothers were the biggest donors to his campaign. His entire career is carefully intertwined with the Koch brothers and advocating for whatever they wanted him to advocate for.

What we see is that the Koch brothers are advocating against our working with other nations to take on the challenge of climate chaos. Now, Mother Nature sent us a big, rude awakening this last year with three powerful hurricanes tearing apart parts of our country and with forest fires stretching from Montana across to the Pacific Ocean and down the Pacific coast, deep into California, because of the carbon pollution that is warming the seas and changing the weather patterns and drying out our forests.

We suffer that, but we see so much more. We see the moose dying. We see the lobsters migrating. We see the oysters unable to have babies. A billion of them died back about the time I took office here in the Senate because of the acidification of the ocean, coming from carbon pollution.

The whole world is coming together to try to take on this problem, but Mr. Pompeo is uninterested in this major threat facing humanity. He supports our disengaging from the international community and taking this on. He is fine letting China take the lead and producing the economic results of taking the lead instead of the United States taking the lead and being engaged in these partnerships. So, colleagues, those are my concerns.

We need an individual dedicated to the power of diplomacy, not someone who reaches first for the sword. We need an individual who respects different religions and respects the opportunity in the United States that we carry to the world as a beacon of freedom, not one who disrespects it. Third, we need an individual whose career is not tied to a single industry and whose outlook is to continue to protect that industry, even in taking this job.

So for those reasons, this nomination should be turned down.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from North Carolina.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EARTH DAY 2018

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Sunday, April 22, marked the 49th Earth Day. Given the Trump administration's reckless assault on the environment, it is frightening to think where we might be on the 50th Earth Day.

President Trump hasn't built that “big, beautiful” wall he promised. More than a year into his term, he still hasn't filled dozens of critical posts, from Cabinet Secretaries to ambassadors.

Looking at what hasn't been done, a reasonable person might assume that this President still hasn't learned how to make government work. That might be true in many areas, but when it comes to the environment, it is dead wrong.

From day one of his administration, President Trump has used budget cuts, executive orders, and other administrative and regulatory tools to push a concerted rollback of environmental protections. President Trump has repealed or frozen some 850 rules and regulations, many of which have a direct impact on the environment.

He has signaled his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord. America is the largest emitter of carbon gases, and we are the only nation on Earth that is not part of the global effort to save the planet from climate chaos and catastrophe.

Under this President, we have ceded global leadership on the climate to other nations, especially to China. Not only is that shameful, it is bad business. Some of the best-paying jobs of the 21st century will be in renewable energy industries. How are we going to create those jobs and industries in America with a President and administration that refuse to admit even the existence of climate change?

Since Earth Day last year, the U.S. has suffered some of the deadliest and costliest disasters in our history. Last August, Hurricane Irma battered the southern U.S., especially south Florida. It was followed quickly by Hurricane Harvey, which caused an estimated \$200 billion in damage and pummeled Houston. In September, Hurricane Maria caused the worst natural disaster on record in Puerto Rico. Nearly 8 months later, most of the island is still without electricity. After the hurricanes came the wildfires, including some of the worst wildfires in California's history.

Scientists warn that without significant reductions in carbon emissions, climate chaos will become more frequent, more deadly and more expensive.

What is FEMA's response? Strategic plans drawn up by FEMA during both the Obama and George W. Bush administrations acknowledged climate change as a serious threat, right up there with terrorist attacks. Under this President, FEMA has dropped any mention of climate change from its strategic plan. The reality we dare not deny has become the crisis whose name the Agency dare not utter.

Last year and again this year, President Trump has sent Congress budget plans that would gut the Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Scott Pruitt, the President's choice to run EPA, is an ethical nightmare, but he is a polluter's dream. He has vowed to withdraw the Clean Power Plan, a plan to cut emissions from the U.S. power sector by 32 percent from 2005 by 2030. Administrator Pruitt has signaled that he wants to roll back modest new fuel efficiency standards for cars and light-duty trucks—standards that would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The EPA under Donald Trump and Scott Pruitt has suspended the “waters of the United States” rule, designed to reduce pollution in 60 percent of the Nation's lakes, rivers, and streams.

EPA is not the only member of the Trump Environmental Wrecking Crew.

Today, 94 percent of the outer continental shelf in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans is off limits from oil and gas exploration. The Department of the Interior is proposing to open 90 percent of the outer continental shelf for future oil and gas drilling. On top of this, this administration has weakened safety requirements that prevent oil spills.

Interior's Bureau of Land Management is also selling off thousands of federally owned parcels of land for oil and gas development. Among the national treasures up for sale are two national monuments in Utah: the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears, home to some of the richest and most important archeological finds in our Nation.

Interior Secretary Zinke had a special flag designed for himself and ordered that it be flown whenever he was in the Department headquarters. It would be more fitting if he flew the white flag of surrender because that is what this administration is doing.

They are surrendering America's global leadership in the efforts to save this planet from climate catastrophe, and they are surrendering decades of important and lifesaving progress we have made since the first Earth Day in safeguarding our environment, preserving our natural treasures, and protecting the health and safety of the American people.

They are undoing decades of bipartisan agreements that balanced science